WONDER Stories Quarterly

SUMMER 1930

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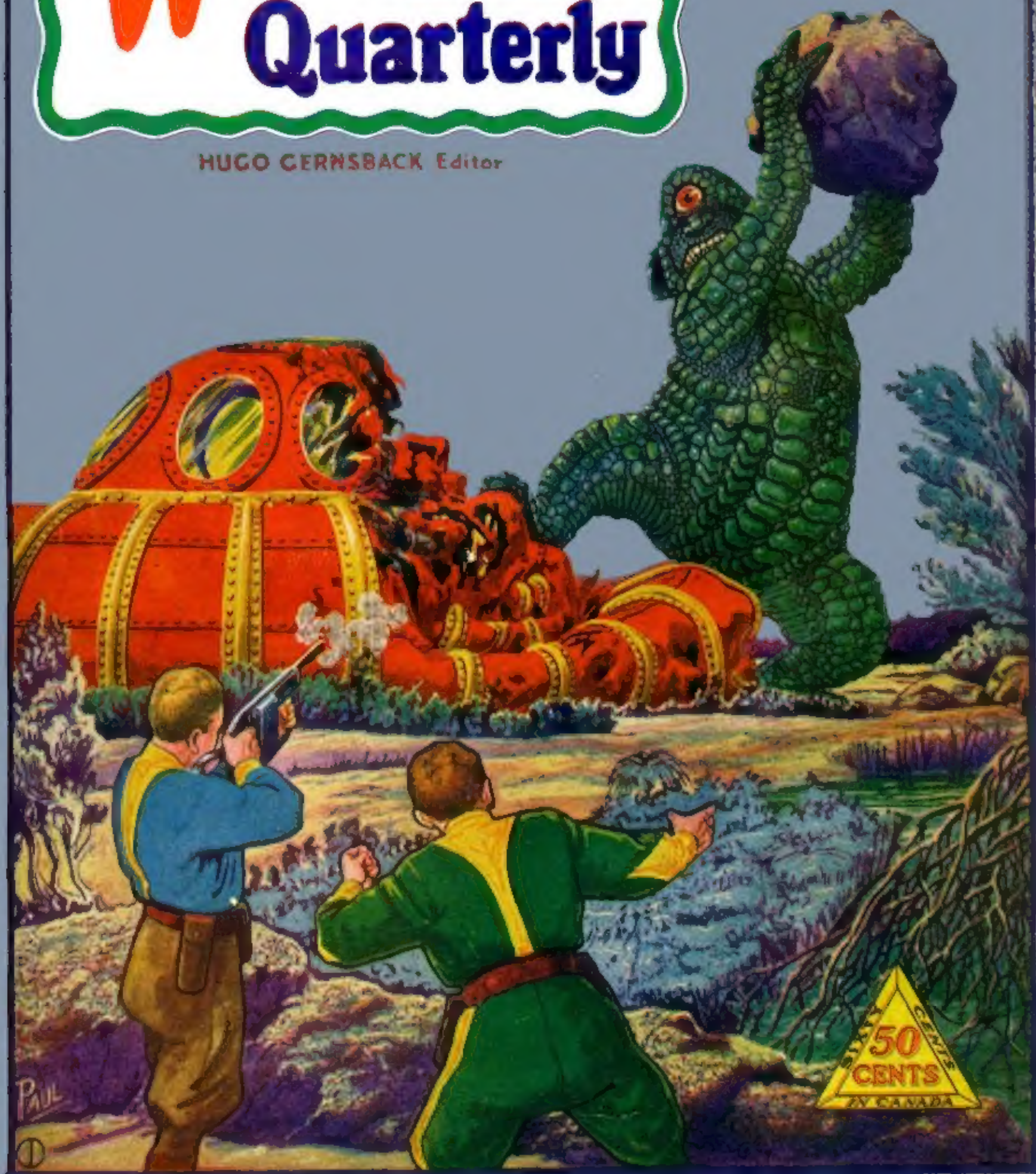
HUGO GERNSBACK Editor



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The Radio Training Association of America
4513 Ravenswood Ave. Dept. SWA-8 Chicago, Ill.

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4513 Ravenswood Ave., Dept. SWA-8, Chicago, Ill.

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WONDER Stories Quarterly

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No. 4

SUMMER
1930

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Photo—Oct. 1930

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BICEPS 17 In.
FOREARM 14½ In.
WAIST 32 In.
CALF 16¼ In.
HEIGHT 5 Ft. 10 In.
WEIGHT 178 Lbs.

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New York City

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Vol. 1 No. 4

WONDER Stories Quarterly

Summer 1930

Editorial, Advertising and General Offices, 98-99 Park Place, New York, N. Y.

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What I Have Done to Spread Science Fiction

IN the Fall, 1929, issue of SCIENCE WONDER QUARTERLY, we announced a contest in which $500 in prizes would be awarded in three installments over a period of nine months to writers of the best letters *illustrating and proving* "What I Have Done to Spread Science Fiction."

We come now to the awarding of the three prizes in the third and final contest, the winners of which are listed on this page. The contest has been an unqualified success and taken together with Science Fiction week has given science fiction a greater impetus than it has received before.

There is no doubt but that the general public is still unaware of this newest of all forces in literature-science fiction. There are today many thousands of readers and fans who enjoy the fruits of our stories, and yet there are millions who either do not know of them or have not yet been able to bring themselves to the mental state in which they can appreciate the wonders of science told through thrilling, well-written adventures. It is a sad commentary on our general level of taste or intelligence that despite the growing popularity of science fiction, the appetite of the American magazine reading public still inclines to wild-west, bronchobusting stories and sex thrillers.

What I Have Done to Spread Science Fiction
PRIZE LETTERS
THIRD CONTEST

1st Prize $100	RALPH MILNE FARLEY, 1265 Fairview Ave., So. Milwaukee, Wis.
2nd Prize $50	F. B. EASON, 400 Jefferson Ave., East Point, Ga.
3rd Prize $20	ROBERT B. KONIKOW, 497 Warren St., Roxbury, Mass.

The thousands of readers that now constitute the science fiction reading public are then the pioneers into the future. In their years of editing of science fiction magazines, the Editors have never believed so firmly as they do now that science fiction will one day sweep the country. But until that day comes, there is the steady winning of new converts, by those we now have. So we go on year after year building substantially the great army of science fiction fans.

One comment appears appropriate now. Science fiction is making a greater and greater appeal every month to women, who were previously uninterested. The letters we get all testify to this increasing interest. This surely is an excellent sign of the times, for there is, as far as we can see, no reason why women should not find the same enjoyment, stimulation and also education in our stories as men do. However, it is probably true that science fiction must extend its appeal to those who are not scientifically trained as well as to those who are. The average man know little of the wonders of science; and he thinks it is something for "scientists" only.

When the day comes that all men and women realize that a knowledge of science is necessary to their lives, a happier day will dawn for mankind.

(*Continued on page* 568)

The Next Issue of WONDER STORIES QUARTERLY
Will Be on Sale September 15, 1930

The WAR of the PLANETS

by

R. H. ROMANS

(Illustration by Paul)

For perhaps one hour they directed their powerful rays toward the city, reducing it to ruins and forcing the terror-stricken inhabitants to run for shelter of the jungle

THE WAR OF THE PLANETS

A Sequel to "The Moon Conquerors"

Foreword

IN the early summer of 1952, the entire earth was startled by the unannounced arrival of a space flyer from another world. But it was soon learned that the visitors were here on a mission of peace. They had brought to their native land three of the five Moon Conquerors, who ten years earlier had made a voyage to the moon in the first earth-made space flyer, the *Astronaut*. Dr. Wm. H. Haverfield and his companions had long ago been given up as dead. It was a pleasant surprise to learn that they were returning safe and sound.

But a greater surprise came when their story was given to the public, and it was learned that the moon was not a dead world as commonly believed, but the home of a race of scientific people, carrying on an existence that was highly artificial.

Soon after his arrival Dr. Haverfield prepared a manuscript telling much of the history of the Selenites. He showed that their race and our own had common ancestors. They were separated about 34,500 years ago, at the time of the greatest catastrophe in human history, the Destruction. Before that time our earth was a member of another solar system. As the two solar systems approached and passed each other, two planets, one of each system, threatened to meet in a titanic crash and annihilate all forms of life on both worlds. One of these planets was the moon and the other was our own earth.

In Dr. Haverfield's *Interplanetary History*, he told of the forces of nature which came to the aid of humanity and averted the crash by the narrowest of margins, but wrought havoc on both worlds. The superior force of gravity of the larger body, the earth, produced enormous tides on the smaller, the moon. As the worlds came closer together, all the lunar seas were drawn from their beds. All loose objects were swept up from the surface in this tidal wave and together with the lunar atmosphere were drawn to the larger body, robbing the moon of all means of sustaining life.

Dr. Haverfield described the conditions of the human race at this time. There were two races: the black masters, known as the Vuduites, and the white race of slaves. This condition had existed for over two hundred thousand years, ever since the Vuduites had risen from savagery to supremacy on the lost planet, which once existed between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. The blacks had eventually developed a great and scientific civilization, while the struggling whites continued as illiterate and rebellious slaves. Centuries after the moon had been colonized by the blacks and their slaves, a catastrophe occurred which destroyed the old world and Vudu supremacy at the same time.

At about the time of the Destruction, a small portion of the white race entered the most desirable of the underground caverns of the moon and enclosed themselves behind air-tight doors. They were led by Zerko, a man of science, who is now regarded by the Selenites as the savior of his world. Being a student of the sciences of the black race as well as those of his own, he understood the transmutation of the elements and taught his people to produce synthetic food as well as an invisible, synthetic atmosphere, which was permitted to escape from the caves and replace the air that had been stolen by the larger planet.

In Dr. Haverfield's former manuscript, he gave a short history of the moon after the Destruction and told of the scientific progress the Selenites had made. In his present manuscript, he gives the world a short story of its first human inhabitants, which in several respects is more interesting and spectacular than his former efforts.

R. H. ROMANS

TO those of our readers who read the marvelous "Moon Conquerors" in the Winter 1930 issue, and those who delight in fascinating interplanetary adventures, the present sequel is enthusiastically presented. Mr. Romans peers into the recesses of history, finds much that is puzzling and unexplained alike to the man on the street and the historian and tears aside the veil of mystery to show us tremendous dramas that may have taken place in the conflicts of great worlds. Nowhere does our author leave the bounds of possibility, and yet from the materials that he has, he constructs breath-taking adventures that carry one on irresistibly, from chapter to chapter.

It is all too true that there is little that we know of what has taken place or is taking place on the planets of our little solar system. Everyone has his own thoughts about the possible races of people that may exist on the eight solar planets. Can they be like us? Have they had the same history? Are they equal to us in intelligence? Are they likely to come here to destroy us? These questions, though unimportant at present, are filled with such interesting possibilities that any number of fascinating stories can be constructed around them. But one will have to go far to equal a story such as our author has given us in the following pages.

THE DOWNFALL OF A GREAT RACE

The Second Manuscript of DR. WM. H. HAVERFIELD A.M., Ph.D.

CHAPTER I

Strangers in a Strange Land

SIX months have now passed since the first part of the Interplanetary History has been published.* Those months have been one of the busiest periods of my life. The commerce between the two worlds has demanded my personal attention and as an ambassador from the moon, I have had more affairs of state to handle than any foreign diplomat at Washington. The selection of one thousand young men to be sent to the moon to study the sciences and arts of that world and later return to teach our people, has been a very difficult task, particularly so since a constant lookout must be maintained to avoid a class of adventurers, who hope to exploit the Selenites for their personal fortunes.

Geographical and scientific societies seem to have the impression that I have plenty of time for touring the country and giving lectures before their groups. Editors of scientific publications have tried to persuade me to drop everything and fill their pages with articles at five dollars per word. And the public seems to think my entire time should be spent in shaking hands and attending celebrations in our honor. Popularity has its penalties and fame has its disadvantages. The "Gentlemen of the Press" have denied me all privacy; it seems that every half grapefruit I eat is sure to be mentioned in the headlines the same morning.

But the Universal News Syndicate, whose newspapers throughout the country were the first to publish my former narrative, have been very patient and kind. They seem to appreciate the fact that I can not do everything at once; and I believe their patience should be rewarded. Consequently I am neglecting my other duties for one day in which to prepare the manuscript I promised six months ago. I had hoped to spare myself this task, but for reasons that will appear later, I could not do it. I now have a microphone before me, into which I am relating this story. The microphone is connected to two improved Ediphones in another room. As soon as I have dictated enough to fill one record, an assistant throws a switch which stops one machine and starts the other to recording my words. While the second record is being filled, the first is sent to a typist who puts the story on paper and a third record is made ready to start as soon as the second is filled. In this manner, I can devote my entire attention to the story, knowing that it will be ready to read as soon as I have finished.

It will be remembered that in my former manuscript I spoke of third dimensional motion pictures in both sound and color, which are used in teaching history in the Selenite colleges. I had hoped to be able to bring these pictures to the earth and let our people learn the story as I learned it by seeing the pictures of the events as they happened. But due to a peculiar characteristic of the Selenites, this is impossible. They live much longer and much slower than we do. In a lifetime of one thousand years, ten of our years is considered a very short time. When our people decide to do a thing, they are not long about doing it, but the Selenites like to take their time. The only time I ever saw any of them get in a hurry was the time they discovered that terrestrial food was more desirable than their own synthetic diet. Their appetites stimulated their activities and that is the only reason that commerce has flourished between the two worlds and the price of foodstuffs has advanced so rapidly during the past three months.

But as for sending these pictures to our world, they say that due to the fact that we have no laboratories equipped for duplicating pictures of that kind in quantities sufficient for our use, the work must be done in their world. They think it encouraging when they say the pictures will be ready for us in about ten years. They can not realize that within ten years a large portion of our population will have passed away and their places filled by others.

That makes it necessary at this time to present the story from the printed page. You readers will no doubt give it your undivided attention, but your imaginations can not possibly conjure a complete vision of the scenes, as I realize only too well that my meager description can not do them justice.

The First Maps of the Earth

IT was 2,500 years after the Destruction, or about 32,000 years ago that the Selenites learned the secret of controlling gravity and using it as a means of astronautical transportation. Previous to that time they had their hands full in preparing their own world for comfortable habitation. Consequently little interest was shown in the giant neighbor world, the earth, which they considered uninhabitable because of its force of gravity, which was six times as great as that to which they had been accustomed. But thinking that their ancient enemies, the Vuduites, had probably succeeded in overcoming these adverse conditions and thus established a few colonies, the reigning Zerko of Dunel* authorized a complete exploration of Barlenkoz.**

The first exploring expedition was composed of a fleet of twenty spherical space flyers, equipped with all weapons of defense known to their world at that time. They were instructed to use their weapons only for their defense, because the reigning Zerko and his Supreme Council could see that unpleasant interplanetary difficulties would arise, should the planet prove to be already inhabited by intelligent beings of any form and an unwarranted attack were made by the inhabitants of another world.

It will be remembered that heretofore astronautics was an unknown science to them. In the past, all secrets of this kind were carefully guarded by the Vuduites, who saw that with little encouragement, their white slaves were capable of mastering any of their sciences. Consequently, after the Selenites had learned to control gravity, they had to learn all the problems of space flying for themselves. For many centuries their scientists had told them of the dangers and problems that would be encountered, but it remained for the first pioneers of astronautics to learn the secrets for themselves.

The expedition met with no mishaps as they left their own world. No time will be taken in describing their experiences as they journeyed across the 240,000 miles of cold empty space. Photographs were taken of the giant world as an aid in learning its physical character-

*See "The Moon Conquerors," by R. H. Romans, Winter 1930 Issue SCIENCE WONDER QUARTERLY

*King of the Moon.

**Barlenkoz is the Selenite word for "A Great Danger" or "The Big Menace." Since the earth has always terrorized them, it is named Barlenkoz.

istics and mapping it before the task of exploration started. These photographs are hard to identify with the maps of our world as we know it today. The continent of South America presented almost the same features as it does today, but in the Amazon valley, a huge lake or sea is shown. Since this does not appear on photographs of that region taken at a later date, it is believed that this sea was nothing but a flooded condition of the Amazon Valley. Atlantis appears as a continent about the size of Australia, almost connecting the coast of Brazil with that of Africa and extending as far north as the Azores. The West Indies are part of the peninsula of Florida. Alaska, and Asia are connected by land that almost fills the Bering Sea. Australia and the East Indies form a vast peninsula extending from the continent of Asia. The British Isles are not only a part of the European Continent, but that continent extends to Iceland.

The Eastern Hemisphere is but one vast undivided continent, comprising Europe, Asia and Africa. In the region now occupied by the Sahara Desert, there is a large inland sea, which has no outlet to either the Atlantic nor Indian Ocean. North of this body of water, which for want of a better name I shall call the Sahara Sea, four smaller inland seas were to be found. The largest occupied almost the same boundaries as the present Caspian Sea, another very small sea took the place of the present Black Sea. In the valley now occupied by the vast Mediterranean, two prehistoric seas were found. All four of these seas were without outlets.

CHAPTER II

The Planetary Swirl

As the fleet of explorers approached the earth, they were astounded at the rapidity with which its surface moved toward the east. They were not far from the equator, where the motion of the earth as she turns on her axis approximates one thousand miles per hour. This was enormous in comparison with that of the moon, which turns on her axis at the rate of but ten miles per hour at its equator. As the twenty spheres came closer to the earth, they found that the atmosphere was moving at exactly the same speed as the surface. They encountered a gale of rarefied air, which was moving so fast it could not be entered in safety.

One of the spheres attempted to descend to the surface, only to be swept away by this planetary swirl. This sphere was never seen again, neither were any messages received from it by radio or television. No doubt the pilots lost all control of their space flyer as it was tossed about at the mercy of the winds. After a consultation, the entire fleet began moving toward the east until it was estimated that their speed approximated that of the surface below, when one by one they attempted to enter the terrestrial atmosphere. Another sphere dropped a few miles below its companions, but it was soon seen that it was being thrown about, entirely out of control, plunging toward destruction. A third tried it and perished in the attempt.

The remainder of the fleet was having trouble in keeping their craft under control, even at a much higher altitude and in an atmosphere less dense. They rose to a higher altitude and held a consultation. It was believed to be nothing short of suicide to attempt a landing near the equator, consequently it was decided to attempt entering the atmosphere near one of the poles. At that season of the year, the North Pole was in darkness, so the fleet moved toward the south. When they reached the frozen Antarctic regions, the planetary swirl was not very noticeable and they had no difficulty in descending to within a few thousand feet of the surface.

They had no sooner entered the atmosphere than another difficulty presented itself. On their own world, winds are entirely unknown. They were puzzled by the fact that their spheres had a tendency to move in a direction other than that desired by the pilots. It was some time before they learned that this was due to air currents, which they later learned existed everywhere on this strange planet. But after the cause for the strange behavior of their craft was learned, they lost no time in learning how to overcome the effects of the wind. The frozen wastes of Antarctic ice, the strange birds and the strange seals swimming in the icy waters and awkwardly lumbering over the ice surprised the explorers, who thought no life could exist under such adverse conditions.

But they were not long in learning that the menacing planet presented many other interesting and beautiful scenes that were unknown to these daring explorers from the moon. The distant horizon, even at very low altitudes was quite a contrast to the near horizon of their own smaller world. The rolling waves of the sea gave them a view that was inspiring and majestic and yet fearsome. The fleecy clouds above them and the clear blue sky was a remarkable contrast to the sky of absolute black, dotted by millions of tiny stars, that existed eternally above their own world.

Down to Barlenkoz!

At last the explorers reached the southern extremity of the South American continent. The pictures taken at this time were very interesting to the Selenites, but to us they would be rather commonplace. They resemble the motion pictures taken from an airplane of today, except for the fact that nothing is to be seen except rivers, lakes, mountains, plains and virgin forests. Nothing would indicate that the foot of man had ever stepped on the surface of the continent. Much of the exploring was done at low altitudes while the fleet was moving very slowly. This gave them a chance to study and photograph any forms of animal life that were not frightened away by the spheres in the air.

Many of these animals, while rather common to a Terrestrial, were considered very strange and peculiar by the Selenites, upon whose world animals are more scarce. They were shocked to learn that many of the wild terrestrial animals were carniverous, a habit unknown to all the animals of the moon. When they came upon a group of crocodiles in a tropical river, they thought they had found the last word in frightfulness; a huge boa constrictor discovered a short time later made the crocodiles look gentle in comparison.

In past ages, expeditions of Vuduites exploring Mars had found that certain creatures of a strange form were intelligent and forced their domination over the other strange creatures of that planet. The Selenites knew that it was possible for intelligent creatures to occupy forms other than human. For that reason, they examined every creature very carefully and very cautiously for the purpose of determining his mental status. When they found giant turtles, serpents and crocodiles, several of the expedition were confident that reptile life was the most intelligent on the planet. I do not mean that they attributed any high degree of intelligence to these creatures, but they were considered a little above the four

footed creatures that hurried to safety at the approach of a reptile.

The four footed animals were a source of wonder to the explorers. On the moon, bipeds predominate while quadrupeds are unknown. The Selenites attributed this condition to the fact that the force of gravity of the earth made four legs necessary to carry the enormous weight of the body; the earth according to them was unfit for man, who was a biped.

A Battle with a Tyrannosaurus

NEAR the mouth of the Amazon river, the explorers found a creature that was more of a mystery to us than he was to the Selenites. My first glimpse of the motion pictures of this creature was one of the most surprising things encountered during our sojourn on the moon. I had to have that particular scene shown to me several times before I felt safe in identifying the monster as the giant *Tyrannosaurus Rex,* Nature's largest and most terrible living engine of destruction, the most frightful of all beings that ever roamed over the earth in any of the past ages. According to our own scientists, this creature belonged to a much earlier age and was as extinct 32,000 years ago as he is today.

What right did he have to make an appearance at this comparatively recent date? All Dinosaurs had supposedly perished during the latter part of the Mesozoic period, the second period in the history of terrestrial life, before the early mammals of the Cainozoic ages. Probably a few survivors of the earlier ages had continued to exist in warmer climates long after their species were believed to have become extinct. Probably Nature herself, through ages of evolutionary changes, had remodeled the form and size of the early giant reptiles, producing other types, many of which still survive. In that case, this creature could have been an atavism, a throw-back to an earlier age, rather than a true Tyrannosaurus. But regardless of how he happened to be here, he was the only Dinosaur ever photographed by the Selenites and the only one of which any authentic record remains.*

As the spheres approached the giant tyrant lizard, the monster was wading in the river, probably searching for food. Only his head, neck and smaller forelegs were above water. As he saw the spheres above him, he challenged them to fight. Unlike the other living creatures who hurried to cover as the spheres approached them, this undisputed master of his environment did not know the meaning of fear. He rose on his strong hind legs, lifting half of his body out of the water and waded closer to the shore to meet his enemies. He now looked like he might prove to be a monster sea-serpent, as the true shape of his body was not yet revealed. As the spheres failed to come closer, the giant reptile submerged his body, but a few minutes later he was seen nearer the shore, still in deep water with only his eyes above the surface. The Selenites did not know whether he was trying to hide from them or merely waiting for them to come closer.

At last one sphere decided to get a better view of the submerged monster and came to a position about fifty feet above him. Seeing that it was not coming closer, the reptile attacked the sphere. He tried to jump up and reach it, but failed to get entirely out of the water. He was now very angry. His tail was lashing the water and his forefeet were madly clawing the air. He uttered no sound, but his jaws were snapping in anticipation of the dinner he expected.

After observing his anger in the water for several minutes, the Selenites decided to try and entice him out on dry land. Keeping just out of his reach, they moved toward the shore. The Tyrannosaurus followed them out on dry land. He now looked to be about forty feet from snout to tail and his powerful hind legs were taxed to the limit to carry the weight of his enormous body. He showed his rage by clawing the ground and snapping at the air. Several times he tried to leap up into the air to reach the mysterious enemies who so easily eluded him. But he was no better at jumping than an elephant. The enormous muscles of his two hind legs were unable to propel his body more than two feet into the air.

His anger now amused the Selenites, who did several things to tease him. A big bundle on the end of a long rope, suspended from one of the spheres, was offered to him. He became more active than ever as he tried to grasp this tempting mouthful, but it was always just out of his reach. After several hours, the monster was very tired and only by letting the bait come within a few feet of him, could he be tempted to strike at it. The sun was nearing the horizon and the Selenites decided to destory the creature before he could return to the water.

The bundle of waste material was dropped to him. While he was amusing himself by tearing it to pieces with his mighty teeth and small forelegs, another bundle was being prepared. This second bundle contained nothing but explosives. As it was dropped from the sphere, at the end of a rope, he opened his jaws like a crocodile and again rose on his hind legs. The package was dropped into his enormous open mouth, which closed upon it.

The explosion blew his terrible head to atoms, but his body became more active than ever. He clawed the ground with both feet, rolled over and over and again tried to leap into the air. His tail was striking terrific blows, knocking trees over as his headless body continued to writhe in agony. Here was another mystery to the Selenites. They could not understand a creature so frightful as this, who refused to die after his head was blown to atoms. They had the idea that his head was not the center of his intelligence. Probably his brains were located in some other part of the huge body.

But they determined to destroy the monster, so a heat ray was turned on him. This heat ray consumed his entire body, but the last part to be destroyed continued to move until it was utterly charred. They had failed to find where his brain was located and it was believed by many that the creature never had any. But they knew that he was the master of his environment. A creature armed with such powerful natural weapons, who refused to die until the last part of his hideous body was consumed, was an antagonist against whom no living creature could prevail. After this incident, they refused to let their spheres touch the ground, for fear of being ambushed by other creatures such as this. The motion pictures of this specimen of frightfulness has produced more nightmares among the Selenites than any other single thing. It put a stop to terrestrial exploration for centuries, because no one dared venture upon a world where such monsters were known or believed to exist.

*A later expedition of Selenites reported seeing a group of cave men fighting and vanquishing a Tyrannosaurus. This story was verified by every member of the expedition, but inasmuch as they were equipped for photographing everything of interest and failed to secure pictures of this battle and brought back pictures of things less interesting, their story has been doubted. Selenite scientists declare it impossible for savages to annihilate such a ferocious creature. Unless the cold blooded Tyrannosaurus were handicapped by cold weather or was sick and about to die of natural causes, I feel inclined to agree with those who doubt the story.—W. H. H.

CHAPTER III

Signs of Life!

ATLANTIS was the next continent to be explored. The spheres separated as they reached this continent, but kept in touch with each other by radio and television. They were united as they crossed a narrow channel separating Atlantis from Africa. They again separated for the purpose of exploring the continent that has always been a dark mystery even to our own race. Several strange creatures that slightly resembled the human form were discovered on the African continent. These animals, known to us as monkeys, apes and gorillas, puzzled the explorers. At once they jumped at the conclusion that they were human beings, whose present condition had been produced by a backward evolution. They thought this was the result of Nature's attempt to adapt humanity to the adverse conditions of the giant world. Many of our own scientists have tried to prove that our own race has developed on our own planet from creatures such as these. Thirty-two thousand years ago, these Selenites tried to prove that the apes were merely the degenerates of the human family on a world not adapted to their needs. After reading their arguments and studying this theory, I came to the conclusion that they were no more ridiculous than some theories I had taught years ago and no doubt would still be teaching, had I not visited another world and seen the true origin of man.

One sphere had just passed over a range of mountains on the western coast of Africa at an altitude of about ten thousand feet, when something was observed on the ground that resembled a cultivated field. Thinking that this might lead to the discovery of intelligent or civilized beings, the Selenites decided to descend cautiously and photograph anything of interest that was to be found.

Fearing that they might frighten the creatures, whatever they might prove to be, they began their investigation with powerful telescopes from the air. One observer soon found something of interest. When he informed his companions of the discovery and gave the location, all telescopes were turned upon a pair of scantily clothed human beings, whose skins, originally white, were tanned to a light brown. This couple, one of each sex and evidently a pair of lovers, were sitting on the trunk of an overturned tree. One arm of the young man was thrown affectionately over the shoulder of the maid, who was listening to something her companion was trying to explain as he pointed to the skin of some animal at his feet. Probably he was doing something that all young men still enjoy doing, boasting of his power over his enemies and trying to persuade her that he was just the fellow to protect her from her enemies also.

Perhaps the description of this scene should be omitted or I will find myself writing a love story, something I would not do even if I knew all the details. There are enough other things to describe, things that proved more interesting to the Selenites, as I am sure they will prove to the readers of the twentieth century. At a distance of about one quarter of a mile from these two lovers, a number of overhanging rocks and openings denoted caves in the cliffs. At the entrance of these caves were numerous piles of stones that were evidently placed there to be hurled at any enemies that might attack from the cleared field below. In the shade of the trees surrounding the caves on the mountainside, several men, scantily clothed in skins, were to be seen lying on the ground. Their weapons of wooden spears, clubs and huge stone hammers were scattered about them. Far below them in the cleared fields were a number of women pulling weeds and undesirable plants up by the roots, thus making it easier for their crops to grow.

A Battle with a Sabre-toothed Tiger

FROM a cave on the opposite side of the clearing, a naked boy was seen climbing down the cliff. He was just starting across the field toward the women when a commotion in the bushes startled him. As he turned to look, a cry of mortal terror escaped his lips and a giant sabre-toothed tiger leaped at his victim with a cry that not only paralyzed the lad, but caused the Selenites to tremble.

The women in the fields screamed and seized their children, dragging them to the shelter of the caves, which now, like a net of angry hornets, was alive with hundreds of savage warriors. Armed with their crude weapons, the men swarmed down the cliffs to attack their enemy, who was now snarling over the dead body of his prey. The female of the species today may deny that she is more deadly than the male, but when her children are threatened she would probably prove just as deadly as the ladies of this prehistoric tribe of cave men. Long before any of the warriors reached the enemy, women from the caves were hurling stones from the many small piles with such force and accuracy that the sabre-toothed tiger was bellowing with pain and rage and could not devote his entire attention to the furious regiment of infantry advancing toward him on all sides.

One of the most fiercely fought battles of all time was witnessed by the explorers, whose cameras recorded every movement and every sound of the battle. For a brief time the giant beast crouched on the ground, while his long tail waved over his back like a battle flag. It is impossible to determine whether the beast charged the naked warriors or the savages charged the sabre-toothed tiger. But with a fierceness that was about equal on both sides, the opposing forces met, neither side knowing the meaning of mercy or quarter nor the fear of death. Like an avalanche of fury, the giant tiger was in several places at the same time, mowing his enemies down with his cruel fangs and claws. The warriors had no shields and but few weapons other than those provided by Nature, but they fought with a fierceness that would make the warriors of any modern nation sue for peace. They never turned their backs to the enemy, but rained blow after blow upon the head and body of their foe.

The women of the tribe, seeing that they could no longer hurl stones without doing as much damage to their men as to their enemy, climbed down the steep cliff and came to the aid of their husbands, fathers, and sons, many of whom were now lying on the ground wounded and probably dying. As these additional foes appeared, the tiger turned and ran, followed by his shouting enemies, whose mad charge was just as furious as his own. For the second time the great cat crouched with his belly to the ground, waving his long tail above his back as he prepared to charge.

For the second time, the battle started, this time without any intentions of either side running away. The blood-curdling cries of the tiger mingled with the battle cries of the warriors and the screams and moans of the wounded and dying. The civilized men witnessing the battle from a position of safety could not say that this sound came from the animal and those came from human throats. For several fierce minutes the battle con-

(Illustrated by Paul)

The monster became more active than ever as he tried to grasp this tempting mouthful. But it was always just out of his reach.

tinued, until the terrific force of a blow from a huge stone hammer struck a vulnerable spot on the leg of the tiger, breaking the bone. After this the cat ceased to jump, but continued to fight against the scores of clubs and war-hatchets that were hammering his body with merciless blows.

At last the tiger's efforts became more feeble and those of the savages became more intense. The tiger ceased to move, but the warriors continued to hammer him. The battle was over; the victorious warriors lifted their fallen foe to their shoulders and triumphantly carried it toward their caves, while the women, probably not quite so deadly as the male, but much more merciful and humane, turned their time and attention to the wounded and dying soldiers, whose bodies were strewn about the battle field.

I find it impossible to describe the surprise of the Selenites as they witnessed the battle. Their theory that humanity could not exist on the new world was proven false. Here was a tribe of human beings who had proven that they could not only stand upright and carry their own weight, but could also outfight the cruel fangs and claws of carnivorous beasts. At first they were ashamed to admit that these savages were descended from their own common ancestors, but before the battle was over, they envied the courage of their fighting Barlenkozian cousins!

A Visit from a Deity!

THE Selenites wanted to help these savages, but they did not think it wise to give them things they would not know how to use. They wanted to get into communication with them, but realized that even if the languages were about the same as their own, evolution had made many changes in both during the intervening twenty five centuries and neither could understand the new words of the other. When the sphere was first noticed, the savages hurried to the shelter of their caves and overhanging rocks, but soon an old man ventured forth. This was probably the king or priest of the tribe, much wiser than the others. When it was seen that he suffered no harm, others made their appearance.

The old chief shouted to the sphere, but his words were not understood. A Selenite shouted a reply that brought no response. At the example of the chief, the entire tribe bowed their heads in reverence to this strange deity. The Selenites could do nothing to make them raise their heads. No doubt this was the first time their deity had consented to visit them and they must show him their reverence.

There were but few gifts that could be given the savages that would do them much good. Fire was the one thing the Selenites thought they needed more than anything else. They directed their heat ray toward a huge pile of brush and rubbish, which instantly burst into flames. They then dropped a large package of steel knives in the midst of the prostrate savages, as well as large coils of rope and several articles of clothing.

Inside the sphere, the Selenites had maintained a condition of gravity that was about equal to that of their own world. Outside the sphere, terrestrial conditions prevailed and they would be unable to support their own weight. For this reason, they could not show the savages how to use these new presents, but believed that they would learn the purposes for themselves.

CHAPTER IV

The Vuduites Are Located

WHILE one sphere of the expedition was witnessing the battle of a tribe of cave men with a Sabre-toothed tiger, two other spheres were slowly moving toward the east, just north of the sea that once occupied the great Sahara Desert. But little of importance was found until one observer saw a fleet of spheres similar to their own, moving toward the south, across the Sahara Sea. At first it was believed that they were members of their own expedition, but after all attempts to communicate with them by radio had failed, it was decided that they were strangers. Fearing that they might prove to be their ancient enemies, the Vuduites, the Selenites hesitated about making themselves known.

Their radio had just informed them of the discovery of a tribe of white savages a thousand miles to the west, so they knew that humanity could exist on the giant world. Hoping to learn more of this mysterious fleet of spheres, they closed all doors and portholes of their ships and rose to an extremely high altitude and followed the strange fleet to their destination, which proved to be a city on the southern shores of the Sahara Sea. They were surprised to find evidence of a high degree of civilization surrounding this city. Strange ships were floating on the sea and a great wall surrounded the city to protect the inhabitants against the carnivorous beasts that evidently roamed through the dense jungle, just outside the wall.

From a lower altitude, they were able to see the inhabitants through their powerful glasses. When it was noticed that they were not black men, they could not understand it. As they continued to study the strange city, they made the discovery that the men doing all the work were of the white and mixed races, while in the more luxurious parts of the city, several of the black masters were to be seen. The explorers now knew that the majority of the aristocratic blacks were inside the buildings and thus protected from the rays of the tropical sun, while the slaves were working at their tasks, regardless of the heat and unaware of the two spheres high above them, watching their every move.

The nature of the architecture of the buildings, their form and arrangement as well as the condition of everything in general, told the Selenites that the inhabitants were none other than the descendents of the Vuduites, who had been the masters of the white race since the dawn of their history. The Selenites had inherited a deep undying hatred toward the Vuduites, as well as a great fear. Their new discoveries only verified the fact that Barlenkoz was a genuine menace in fact as well as in name. They thought it best that their ancient enemies remain in ignorance of their existence and never learn of their homes on the moon. Knowing that all the atmosphere and water had disappeared from the moon at the time of the destruction, the Vuduites no doubt considered the old world uninhabitable. Since there was more space in the earth than they could utilize for thousands of years, they saw no necessity for exploring a dead world.

But the Selenites were curious. They descended to a lower level in hopes of learning more about the city, but they were observed by those on the ground. For several minutes the inhabitants of both races swarmed out of their houses to look at their visitors. Attempts were made to signal to them, but the Selenites could

not understand the signals. The Vuduites were now certain that the two spheres were strangers. Suddenly there was a mad scramble for shelter, as it became evident that those on the ground feared the strangers in the sky.

The Selenites soon learned that strange rays were being turned on their ships of space and these would soon do irreparable damage to their gravity controls. Consequently they rose in the air and concealed themselves behind a cloud. When they again ventured forth, they found that there were no less than a hundred spheres in the air, trying to locate them. The Vudu spheres evidently preferred to capture their visitors, rather than destroy them inasmuch as no attack was made and it is not to be supposed that they had no weapons. But the Selenites did not choose to be captured. They had weapons and they used them against their pursuers, bringing many of them to the ground. Seeing that the visitors were making their escape, the Vudu spheres decided to use their weapons and succeeded in bringing one of the strange spheres to the ground. The other increased its speed and made an escape, after which it radioed its companions and called them together for a council of war.

Some of the explorers favored a surprise attack against the Vudu city and completely destroying it, while others thought it wiser to postpone the attack. They had no way of knowing that there were not other such cities on Barlenkoz and the destruction of one would only cause trouble with the others. They remembered that they were under orders to use their weapons only for self defense and although it is not recorded, there was probably a feeling that they themselves might be annihilated before the destruction of the city was complete.

Another City Found

BUT at any rate, the purpose of the expedition was to learn as much as possible about the new world and they remained true to that purpose. The entire fleet returned to the Vudu city and maintained a constant watch from a high altitude, where they would be invisible to the naked eye of an observer on the ground. They were unable to intercept any strange radio signals and it is believed that they either failed to discover the wavelength used by the blacks, or that form of communication was not in use. This led the Selenites to believe that there were no other cities with which communication could be had.

But one morning as they were watching this ancient city on the southern shores of the Sahara Sea, they learned the error of this theory. They saw a small fleet of spheres rise into the air and move across the sea toward the north. The Selenites followed at a safe distance in order to learn their destination. The Vudu fleet followed a straight line toward the north, across the sea and over a mountainous region and followed the course of a river through a deep valley to a smaller sea, upon whose shores several smaller cities were to be noticed. This region being in a more temperate climate, was more favorable to human habitation.

In this valley, over which now roll the waters of the Mediterranean, several cities were found of various sizes, connected by roadways upon which the commerce and transportation between them was carried. The gravity-controlled spheres were evidently not used extensively. It was believed that their use was confined to the aristocratic blacks, who feared to trust such valuable secrets to their slaves who were constantly looking for an opportunity to escape. The countryside was populated by the blacks, who lived in beautiful mansions, while the slaves were kept in chains and permitted to enjoy only a miserable existence in wretched hovels. It was almost an exact duplication of conditions that existed for thousands of years on the moon and the lost planet where humanity supposedly had its origin, ancient Tiverpo. The manual labor was all done by the slaves, who were still rebellious and trying to escape and form small tribes of their own, while the aristocratic black masters continued to enjoy their ancient condition of idleness and luxury.

It was with difficulty that this region was explored by the Selenites. They knew the dangers that would arise, should they be discovered. The conditions at this time gave them an idea of the past, there was still much conjecture as to the events when the first Vudu spheres arrived from the moon, 2500 years earlier. It is known that they were of a scientific nature and knew more about the control of gravity than the Selenites at the time of this first exploration. It is possible that they used small devices attached to their bodies for the purpose of nullifying the effect of their added weight, as they arrived from a world whose gravity was only one-sixth as powerful as the earth's. If this is true, the succeeding generations born on the new world developed a muscular strength that made their movements more natural. Easier than any other animal, the human race can be adapted to strange conditions.

CHAPTER V

A Battle With the Vuduites

TWO weeks had been spent in observing the conditions in the Mediterranean Valley before the explorers were discovered. During this time it was learned that the black races was still supreme and the whites were either in slavery or living a savage life of fierce cave-men. The third race, created in a despairing effort to maintain Vudu supremacy by the debasement of Vudu blood, still enjoyed a condition that was exempt from slavery but denied the privileges of citizenship. White and black alike seemed to resent the presence of the mixed race. Their migration to other lands was not only permitted but encouraged and aided by the blacks. While the whites were fighting for their freedom from slavery and the right to form tribes of their own, the brown race was being aided in establishing homes in distant lands. They were permitted to carry scientific knowledge with them, as well as anything that would make them safer from their natural enemies.

It was while observing a sphere on the ground making preparations for the migration of a number of the surplus members of the mixed race, that the fleet of explorers had approached closer than usual to the ground. Their usual caution had been forgotten, in their desire for more knowledge. Of course they were observed, and a few minutes later, every Vuduite sphere in the city was taking to the air. The Selenites attempted to elude their pursuers by climbing to a higher altitude, but the pursuing spheres followed them and a fierce battle took place.

It was a battle of rays. Both parties had the same heat rays and disintegrating rays, but the Vuduites had another strange ray that would wreck nothing but the gravity controls of their enemies and send the alien

sphere crashing to the earth. For a time the Selenites were able to destroy the enemy spheres without much trouble. The Vuduites were trying to capture the strange ships, rather than destroy them. Fearing they would be able to do this and thus learn their identity, the Selenites remained at as high an altitude as possible and attempted to escape, meanwhile destroying as many of their pursuers as possible. The blacks soon saw that they were suffering great losses without accomplishing anything. Consequently they began making use of their weapons and the Selenite spheres began to crash to the ground. But from that altitude, any sphere that fell would strike the ground with such force that nothing would remain by which its identity could be learned. The battle had started in mid-afternoon and if it were not for the approach of darkness and a very severe storm, it is doubtful if any of the expedition would have survived.

Throughout the night, the explorers sent out radio signals in the hopes of locating their missing companions, but the signals were unanswered. Only six of the original twenty spheres remained. After a consultation, it was decided to abandon all plans of continuing the fight and avenging their fallen companions. Some preferred leaving the menacing planet while the leaving was good, but it was decided to continue the exploration as long as a single sphere remained.

The expedition now moved farther to the north. Mountains rivaling those of their own world in height, loomed in the distance. The lofty peaks of the Alps brought emotions of homesickness to the explorers who had seen over two-thirds of their number go crashing to destruction. It was with difficulty that the leaders persuaded their crews to continue the exploration. As the mountains were passed and the region of the Rhine appeared, the spirit of adventure again asserted itself and they began a diligent search for things of interest on the ground.

Strange creatures that could not be dignified by the name of savages were found in this region. They resembled the human being in form, but their bodies were covered with hair. They were giants in stature and wore no clothing of any kind. They were even more hideous than the gorilla of Africa, whom they resembled as much as they resembled humanity. But they were more intelligent than any ape.

These creatures already knew the secret of making fires, around which the tribe gathered at the approach of darkness. Their weapons were even better than those of the first tribe of white savages discovered in Western Africa, as they had bows and arrows, shields and spears with heads of stone.

If the apes of Africa were a mystery to the explorers, this ultraprimitive Neanderthal Man of Europe was worst yet.* This creature had the rudiments of an intelligence, mediocre as it was and displayed several traits of human character. As with certain more modern men, greed seemed to predominate his emotions. One specimen that attracted my attention more than any other had been photographed while killing a giant cave-bear. It was a fierce battle, but the giant savage did not vanquish the giant bear single-handed. Another creature, slightly smaller in stature, probably the female of the species, fought just as fiercely as he did. Two smaller creatures of the same type, evidently offsprings of the matured savages, took part in the battle and aided in killing the wounded bear.

When the battle was over, the human side of their character was revealed. It was all the four savages could do to drag the dead cave-bear to their own cave. They did not take the trouble to skin the body, but tore it apart with sharp stones. While the mother of the household was cooking a generous portion in the fire outside the cave, the father and the two sons dragged the remainder inside the cave. No part of this body went to waste. Greed was showing itself as a part of their make-up. Every particle of flesh was stored and as this was during a warm season, it is possible that the stench of the decaying food drove the whole family out of the cave. And it is just as possible that the sense of smell was not quite as refined as our own. Perhaps these creatures enjoyed the odor of decaying or ripening meat.

Our own scientists have tried to identify these creatures as the missing link in the process of evolution, between the ape and man. The Selenites tried the same thing, only by their theory *Homo Neanderthalis* had not degenerated quite to the level of the ape. Our Scientists were thinking in terms of a progressive evolution, while the Selenites could only think in terms of a backward evolution. I am sorry that I can not say which of the two theories is the more plausible. But when one has seen the motion of this man-like creature and has heard his wild screams, which can hardly be considered as any form of intelligent speech, he would take no pride in the fact that this creature was related to our race either as an antediluvian ancestor or as a monster with no apparent history or purpose.*

Back to the Moon

THE six spheres now moved eastward toward Siberia, where nothing was found except a vast wasteland. They believed that if anything of interest was to be found, they should go toward the south. Consequently the crippled fleet was soon soaring high over the region now occupied by Arabia and Persia. In the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates, they found a barbaric tribe of people, but they had suffered such severe losses, that no time was spent in observing their habits and learning their mode of living. Several large ships propelled by the trade winds of the Arabian Sea were discovered. This means of propulsion was unkown to the Selenites, who attributed too great a degree of intelligence to the unknown navigators. It was not until a later period that they learned that ships could move under the power of the wind, which was unknown on their own world.

In India many settlements of people of the mixed race were found, who still carried on a more or less extensive commerce with the Vuduites. Their cities, while not so well built as those of the blacks, were copied from the latter. The practice of human sacrifice still prevailed and it was believed that their religion was very similar, if not the same as that of the dominating race.

The brown inhabitants of India were a sea-faring people, whose colonies were found along the southern coast of Asia and the smaller continent of which the East Indies and Australia were a part. In the Eastern part of Asia, in the region now occupied by China and

*The Neanderthal man is supposed by modern science to have been a low form of human being, a part of a race of cave-dwellers.—Editor.

Japan, the brown tribes were following the example of the Vuduites and held many white slaves. At a later exploration, it was found that the slaves were free and living on an equality with their former masters. No doubt the two races intermingled, resulting in the yellow race which now predominates in that section of the world. Fearing a battle that would be a repetition of the disastrous result of too close an investigation of the Vuduites in the Mediterranean Valley, the explorers did not spend much time in the Orient. For that reason, the only glimpse of our world at that period was very brief. They were growing weary of the strange world and wanted to hurry across the Pacific, explore the only remaining continent and return to the safety and comforts of their own world.

As the fleet was crossing the Pacific, they received another surprise. They saw a fleet of large ships floating in mid-ocean and were convinced that the inhabitants of the earth were in possession of means of transportation to any part of the earth they cared to visit. The Selenites were now over cautious and did not dare approach close enough to the ships to learn their identity or their means of propulsion. They did not know whether this was an expedition of explorers like themselves or ships of commerce returning from a visit to civilized parts of the Western Hemisphere. The continent of North America was explored, but no trace was found of man or any animal that remotely resembled him. In Central America they found ruins of buildings that convinced them that civilized mankind had once lived in this region and had either died or migrated to other lands.

The exploration of the menacing planet was now complete. After one year and a half, they were anxious to return to the moon, but feared leaving the earth at that point on account of a possible repetition of the disasters that occurred as they first arrived. They moved rapidly along the eastern coast of North America until the polar regions were reached, which were now enjoying a brief Arctic summer. From the ice cap of this part of the world, they passed through the atmosphere into outer space and returned to their own world with pictures and wonderful stories of the neighboring planet that had a direct influence on the history of their world through all the succeeding ages.

CHAPTER VI

The First War of the Worlds

FROM the first instant that our earth appeared in their skies, the Selenites feared it. At first it threatened to destroy their own little world. In fact it did destroy its surface and make it unfit for human habitation, thus compelling the Selenites to live in the numerous caverns of the interior of the moon. The first exploration was authorized because of fear. A menacing world so close to them was a source of annoyance, especially when it was possible that it harbored intelligent creatures that might cause untold injury in the future.

When the explorers returned and it was learned by the Selenites that their ancient enemies, the Vuduites, had reestablished their former mode of living on the new world, and were also in possession of much more muscular strength than they ever dreamed of, Barlenkoz was considered more of a menace than ever. The Selenites feared the new giant world and they feared the Vuduites, whose ancient science was apparently as commonplace as ever. At once it was suggested that Barlenkoz and the Vuduites should be destroyed as a guarantee of their own safety. But the idea of causing an atomic explosion, such as had destroyed old Tiverpo was not considered very seriously. Even if the moon might by any possible chance survive the explosion, it would fly off into space on a line tangent to its orbit, just as soon as the source of gravity which held it in an orbit was released.

Plans were proposed for poisoning the terrestrial atmosphere, thus destroying all animal life that existed on the earth. There are records of attempts to put this plan into execution, but these attempts resulted in failure. The Supreme Council debated the question of whether or not the terrestrial branch of the human race should be destroyed, but no definite conclusion was reached. Many favored extinguishing the black race before the Vuduites attacked the moon. Others maintained that the Vuduites considered the moon uninhabitable, with neither air nor water and therefore a dead world in every sense of the word. This being their idea, it was not likely that they would ever suspect that the moon harbored a race of white people.

Without the authority of the Zerko or the Supreme Council of the moon, several expeditions came to the earth and attacked their ancient enemies, who were now searching in every remote corner of the earth hoping to locate and identify their mysterious enemies. For many centuries this condition of affairs remained between the two worlds. The Selenites were safe from attack, so they believed, and there was a type of people among them who enjoyed the adventure of a raid against the black and brown strongholds. Of course the Barlenkozians tried to defend their homes and many of the attacking expeditions never returned to their native world. But no war can ever be won by the nations who always remain on the defensive.

Being of a superstitious nature and great believers in the supernatural, the Vuduites possibly attributed the mysterious attacks to the anger of the powerful black deity who lived on the sun. Human sacrifices were now becoming more common than ever, but instead of appeasing their deity the attacks became more and more frequent.

It was three thousand years after the first exploration of the earth that the Pacifist party was outnumbered in the Supreme Council and it was decided to organize and equip an expedition to be sent to the threatening world for the purpose of destroying the Vudu civilization. This expedition, consisting of eight thousand spheres, equipped with several types of destructive rays, started for the earth.

The Battle of Rays

LET me interrupt my amount to state that inasmuch as the Selenites still fear our world and its two billions of inhabitants, we were asked to take an oath before returning to the earth, promising that we would never give certain scientific secrets to our people. Chief among the prohibited inventions were their weapons of defense. Personally, I was very willing to abide by their wishes, because untold injury would result if we were to make it possible to duplicate certain weapons and thus place them in the hands of nations and individuals who are more peaceful and law-abiding without such implements of destruction. For that reason, I shall purposely withhold a detailed description, and tell only of the power and use of a few of the more important rays.

The heat ray was always their favorite weapon. Everyone has observed the effect of condensing the

rays of the sun and focusing the solar light and heat down to a point. It is well known that the larger the lens, the more of the solar rays are thus obtained and the more intense the heat. From a giant lens, the resulting heat at the focal point is hot enough to break down and melt asbestos. The first heat rays of the Selenites were obtained by the simple medium of giant burning glasses.

The Selenites are a scientific race and they enjoy nothing better than duplicating the work of nature by artificial means. For a long time they worked on the problem of creating an artificial beam of light and heat equivalent to that of the condensed solar ray. None of these attempts were successful because of the intense heat generated at the source of the ray, which always destroyed the heat ray projector itself. But at last it was discovered that the heat from the solar arc could be captured and stored away for future use, just as electrical energy can be stored away in storage batteries and later be drawn out and used in its original form.

A description of this process is not forthcoming at this time, but the effect of the result release can only be compared with the condensed solar ray from a lens of great dimensions. The Selenites preferred this weapon to the disintegrating ray, which attacked the atomic and electronic structure of any object that it touched and resolved it to its original nothingness. The disintegrating ray accomplishes something that our own scientists have declared impossible, the destruction of matter. Directed at a solid rock, it would cut a smooth hole into it, the depth of which would depend upon the power of the ray and the length of time it was permitted to play upon it. But in passing through the air, it would destroy the air in its path just as readily. A vacuum was thus created, toward which the surrounding air rushed. A low pressure area was thus formed in the vicinity, toward which the air from the surrounding region always rushed. When used on our world, this always resulted in the approach of moisture laden atmosphere and severe storms. A storm in the vicinity of a Vudu city to be destroyed greatly hindered the work of destruction, hence they preferred the use of the heat ray until the city was almost destroyed; after which a storm would not matter very much.

Another invisible ray, which would wreck the gravity controls of a space flyer was used, but it was not very easy to operate, because of the damage that was often done to the sphere from which the ray was used, Since I am not even describing the nature of the gravity controls, I can not very easily describe the ray that was used to wreck them. Explosives such as are already known were often used, but after it was discovered that the Vuduites had a ray that would cause them to explode at a distance, the explosives were thrown away.

The attack from this vast fleet armed with rays of destruction was a surprise to the blacks, who were unprepared to meet such a host of enemies. As they suddenly appeared over the city south of the Sahara Sea, their work of destruction began. In the jungle surrounding the city, the blacks had hidden their weapons. As the battle started, the Selenites had everything their own way. For perhaps an hour they directed their powerful rays toward the city, reducing it to ruins and making the terror stricken inhabitants run for the shelter of the protecting jungle.

But suddenly the tide of battle turned. The invaders found that rays from unknown sources were being turned upon them. They saw their vast fleet being destroyed before their eyes. One by one their spheres went catapulting to the earth in flames. It seemed that the sky was so full of their own spheres that a ray directed at random was sure to bring several of them to the ground. Two hours after the battle had started, the Vudu city was a mass of molten rock and over half of the invading fleet had perished. The Selenites now made a hasty retreat across the Sahara Sea.

As the attack was carried to the cities in the valley now occupied by the Mediterranean, the invaders learned that this was not exactly going to be a surprise attack. The hills surrounding the cities in that region were full of hidden projectors for several types of rays. Disintegrating rays that annihilated everything they touched, rays carrying more heat than their own and rays that paralyzed or killed any living creature, were used against the Selenites. The battle was becoming fiercer every minute. After suffering great losses, the Selenites fought more desperately.

During the first battle, they soon learned that their great fleet was more of a liability than an asset. They could not remain stationary in the air and use their rays to an advantage without becoming an excellent target for the rays from the ground. Moving about made it easier to avoid the rays of the blacks, but it made it more difficult to aim accurately and there was a constant danger of colliding with spheres of their own fleet. It is probable that half as many spheres were brought down by accidental contact with their own rays as from deliberated attacks from below.

In the battle of the Mediterranean valley, the attacking spheres were not in the way of each other. They maintained an orderly formation and concealed themselves in the clouds, thus making it harder to locate than from the ground. They could see the damage they were doing to the blacks by means of telescopes.

The cities were falling to pieces and the roads were covered with human refugees, fleeing from the scene of the battle. A closer examination showed that the majority of the refugees were whites, probably slaves making use of a desired opportunity to escape. But there were black and brown people among them. The sympathies of the invaders were all with the whites and they did them no intentional harm. They dared not attack the fleeing blacks for fear of destroying some of the less fortunate members of their own race.

Had the battle continued until nightfall, the last remnant of Vudu cities in the valley would have been destroyed. A terrific storm, believed to be caused by too frequent use of the disintegrating ray, had come up and the invaders sought a position of safety high above the clouds. Suddenly hundreds of spheres larger than their own suddenly appeared out of nowhere and began to attack the invaders. This time it was the Selenites who did not know the nature nor the identity of their enemies. It was later believed that they had arrived from some unknown Vudu city that had heretofore escaped discovery by the Selenites. But there was one thing that could not be questioned, they were fighting on the side of the blacks.

The invaders had suffered severe losses and now only a few hundred of their original spheres remained. They put up a desperate fight against the new arrivals, but it was soon seen that the opposing fleet was more experienced in warfare. They moved in an orderly formation and calmly picked off their smaller enemies one by one, while the bewildered Selenites behaved like a frightened herd of sheep. Seeing that only a few of their original fleet remained, they decided to leave the vicinity immediately and seek a place of safety. But

the enemy had other plans; they surrounded the Selenites, determined to prevent a single ship from escaping. As darkness came on, the Selenites managed to elude their enemies, or at least they thought that was what they were doing. No opposition was made as they moved stealthily through the lines of their enemies and moved toward the north.

The Rout

THIS was exactly what the Vuduites wanted. As the last sphere broke through their lines, they turned another kind of a ray on the escaping fleet. This was not a ray of destruction, but a number of powerful searchlights, similar to those in common use today at all airports, which made it easy to observe the fleeing Selenites. The fugitives now made excellent targets as they continued in a straight line toward the North. The pursuing Vuduites picked off one sphere after another, keeping their enemies constantly on the move and constantly worried.

The battle had become a retreat on the part of the invaders and the retreat had become a disorderly rout. The Selenites knew nothing of the orderly military science of today. The ability to act and move as a single unit under the command of one man was unknown to them. As a mob they had attacked; as a mob they had fought and as a mob they retreated. Each man had but one single purpose and one single instinct. That was the instinct of self preservation, the strongest instinct of any creature of flesh and blood. Preservation or protection of the race was forgotten. It was now a case of every man for himself.

But the pursuing spheres retained their self control. As a single unit, under the command of a single person, they acted with but one single purpose, the nature of which the inexperienced warriors from the moon did not understand, nor did they care in particular, as long as they could place more distance between themselves and their enemies. But try as they might, the enemy was always close behind. As soon as the Selenites stopped to reorganize, they would find a heat ray from one of the pursuing spheres melting a hole in one of their ships or a disintegrating ray playing upon them. The mad flight continued until the northern ice cap was reached, after which the Selenites suddenly became homesick and passed through the upper atmosphere into outer space.

They now thought they had eluded their pursuers, whose searchlights were no longer to be seen. They felt certain that the Vudu spheres were unable to travel in outer space. They came to a stop and attempted to count their losses, but the pursuing fleet was upon them. The Selenites scattered in a desperate attempt to elude their enemies, but they learned that their enemies could scatter too. The Vudu spheres now outnumbered the Selenite six to one and each separate ship found itself followed by six enemies larger and more powerful than itself. It was now a case of every ship for itself; some stopped and attacked their pursuers, but in a battle of this kind there could only be one result. The pursuing spheres could not see the wisdom of letting one small Selenite ship of space destroy six of their number. It is an insult to the intelligence of the reader to say which of the seven spheres was to go crashing to the earth.

This was the first time since the Destruction that the Selenites, as a unit, had been engaged in warfare. They now knew that this was one thing of which they were ignorant. Any nation or races that is unaccustomed to warfare is certain to have a number of cowards in their midst. One coward at the controls of a Selenite sphere and the enemy had accomplished his purpose. And it proved that there were several cowards.

With no other thought than that of escaping from their enemies, the remaining spheres selected a straight course to the moon. With no other thought than chasing their mysterious enemies to their lair, learning their identity and carrying the war to their own territory, the Vudu spheres pursued them. True to their one ambition, that of saving their own lives, the Selenites rushed to the entrances of their underground cities. The Vuduites did not attempt to follow, but remained on the outside. Soon other spheres were to be seen rushing to the safety of the cavernous interior of the moon, but the Vudu spheres were waiting for them. The homes of their enemies was now found and there was no excuse for letting other Selenites escape. As the remainder of the fleet returned, they were picked off, one by one, by the avenging Vuduites.

But this was not the end of the first war of the worlds. After suffering the attacks of the Selenites for thousands of years, they determined to return the compliment by destroying their ancient enemies, thus ending for all time, the attacks of the Selenites against a race that was doing them no injury. The Vuduites had differed only in their creed and color and the possession of an history and pride in it which they fought to uphold.

As yet, the black race had not begun to fight. The Militarist party of Selenites repented their crime against humanity as they saw their own people, men, women and children, scientist and illiterate, militarist and pacifist alike perishing under the attacks of the Vuduites.

Imprisoned!

NEVER suspecting that the world would be carried to their own world, the Selenites were totally unprepared. All their weapons of defense had been used to equip the vast fleet that set out to destroy the blacks; no others were available on such short notice and the Vudu spheres had everything their way. At every entrance to the cavernous interior that they could find, the blacks turned their heat rays which melted the surrounding rock. This lava-like mass flowed down into the entrances, sealing them as the lava cooled.

Human life can not exist without the sunlight and its ultra-violet ray. The Selenites maintained their underground existence by bringing the rays of the sun to their luxurious apartments in the cavernous interior of their little world. At Mt. Tycho, where a strange glasslike substance was found in abundance, a monster solar power plant was constructed ages ago. By means of huge lenses and reflectors, they had learned to capture the rays of the sun, convert those rays into energy, transport the energy to their caverns and change it back to sunlight, with all the rays of life and growth. But since the sun shone on Tycho but half the time, one solar power plant was not enough to supply their needs for the entire lunar day. Therefore two other smaller plants were constructed on the other side of the moon, each plant about one third of the distance around their world, so that one was either receiving the full rays of the sun or two were receiving half or more at all times. This maintained a constant source of light in their living quarters.

These solar power plants were not overlooked by the Vudu warriors, who undoubtedly understood their pur-

pose. There being no weapons of defense there, the attacking fleet had no difficulty in completely demolishing them and thus depriving the Selenites of the life-giving rays of the sun. Everything on the surface that could possibly be of use to the Selenites was destroyed. Their destructiveness was so thorough that more worthless objects than useful were destroyed; they were taking no chances against their enemies ever surviving the raid.

Of course the Selenites made several attempts to reopen the entrances to their caverns, but the Vudu guards were constantly on the watch and had no difficulty in keeping them imprisoned in their own apartments. Like ants trying to reopen the entrances to their dwellings, the Selenites continued their efforts. During the long lunar night, they would succeed in reopening a passage, but their enemies would locate it the next day and close it up. For years this siege continued while the Selenites were dying by the thousands.

At last a Selenite scientist developed a machine that by using the principle of gravity control caused the generation of any amount of power desired, from which they manufactured artificial sunlight and the life-giving rays. Their atmosphere being entirely synthetic, they had but little difficulty in keeping it breathable. Their foodstuffs were also a synthetic product, made by the rearrangement of the atomic and electronic structure of common materials, thus transmitting them into starch, protein, fat or any desired element of food. After a siege of one year, the population of the moon had decreased to about fifteen percent of its former numbers, due to diseases and other unexpected developments brought about by their imprisonment.

As the Selenites developed their substitute for the solar light, their condition became more comfortable and they did not worry so much about the closed entrances of their apartments. Consequently the Vudu guards on the surface began to think their enemies had died. But as a precaution, for over twenty years they continued to watch very closely for any signs of life. Meanwhile the imprisoned Selenites had made small openings, just large enough for one man to crawl out. These openings were made at strategic places, under the cover of darkness and the guards never discovered them. It was through this means that they observed the movements of the enemy spheres and learned when it was safe to venture forth.

After the Vuduites had become convinced that the moon was now a dead world, their vigilance was relaxed. Many years had passed since any sign of life had been observed near the old entrances of their caverns. But still another decade passed before the last Vudu sphere was recalled to the earth, and then only did the Selenites feel safe in rebuilding their demolished power plants.

CHAPTER VII

New Life

BEFORE the first war of the worlds, the Selenites reached a state of civilization where they considered no further development possible; it had become stagnant. Compelled by necessity, they now began a new period of activity and progress which was even greater than the period of progress that followed the Destruction. New inventions were produced and the populace found a real joy in living. No one could now devote his entire time to idleness and pleasure; there was work for all and a condition of real happiness existed.

But what was happening on the larger world, while the Selenites were rebuilding their own? Were the blacks rebuilding their demolished cities? Had they suffered such severe losses as had the Selenites? These were some of the questions that puzzled the Selenites; but they did not dare to send an expedition to the earth to answer them. Only by remaining in ignorance of the Vuduites, could they keep their enemies in ignorance of their own condition or even their own existence. During the following twenty centuries, there is no record of a single ship of space crossing the void between the two worlds.

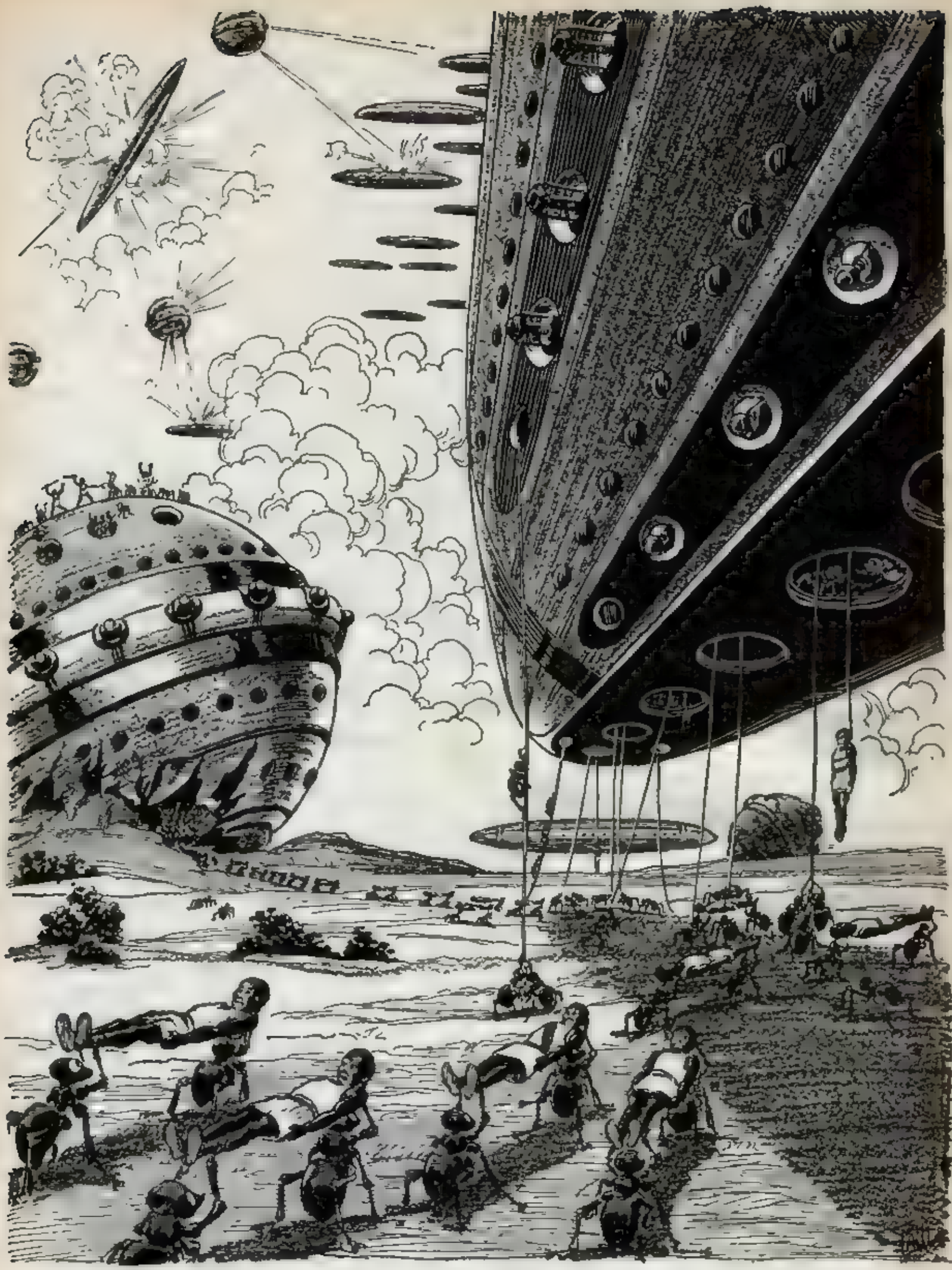
This period was probably as full of events as any equal period in our own history, but the reader will not be bored with events that do not directly concern the earlier inhabitants of this planet. The credulity of the reader would be taxed to the limit, were I to even enumerate the numerous inventions that were produced. The average human mind of our own world is incapable of grasping the full details of the hundreds of seemingly impossible things that were in common use at this time. Truth is, and always has been, stranger than fiction; the greatest imaginative fiction writers of the present day never dreamed of one thousandth of the actual facts that had become commonplace on our sister world at this date, long before the earliest beginnings of our own recorded history.

Six months ago, I gave a very brief history of the moon. There is no need of again repeating it, but a few of the outstanding events deserve mention. By scientific means, the length of their lives was increased to over one thousand years. This brought about an overcrowded condition that necessitated a scientific means of keeping their rate of increase in proportion to the decrease in the population. Another important thing that helped influence the future history of three worlds was a process by which any object, or any part thereof, could be made transparent. It was a costly process and its results were both good and evil. It caused a tremendous increase in crime, but this was offset by its miraculous value to surgery alone. In hands with criminal tendencies, great harm was done, but this was remedied by laws making its use a crime, unless authorized by the proper authorities.

Invisibility, when applied to their spherical ships of space, promised a solution to the problem of what was happening on the menacing planet. It was decided to endow another fleet of spheres with invisibility and send them to explore the earth again and learn what the Vuduites were doing. But this task almost baffled the Selenites, because everything inside the sphere had to be made invisible, as well as the sphere itself. It was a long time before the first sphere was perfected to any degree of satisfaction and it was still longer before a fleet of ten spheres was equipped for the exploration of Barlenkoz.

An Attack from the Unknown

THE invisible fleet was not prepared any too soon. Arrangements were all made and the fleet was in readiness to depart for the menacing planet, when the solar power plants were again attacked and demolished; all the workers at these three stations had mysteriously disappeared. Naturally, this was believed to be the work of the Vuduites and it was feared that the blacks were about to again close and seal the entrances to



(*Illustration by Paul*)

The Martians would carry their helpless victims in an immovable condition, aboard their long ships, storing them away until food was scarce

their apartments. The invisible fleet was ordered to make a thorough search of the surface of their world, in the hopes of locating the marauders and destroying them. If the black race had learned of their existence, a war was sure to follow, which would result in the complete extermination of one of the two opposing races.

The Selenites were at the time divided into two groups which fought each other for control in the Supreme Council. These groups can easily be compared to the political parties of the United States. One was the Militarist party, whose members advocated that the Vuduites should be destroyed before they attempted the destruction of the Selenites. The Pacifist party pointed out the terrors that followed the first war of the worlds and declared that war was a primitive pastime, detrimental to all those who took part in it and it should be avoided.

After the second attack against their power plants, the Militarists became more vociferous than ever and many of the Pacifists deserted their own party and joined the ranks of the Militarists, who soon acquired control in the Supreme Council. After considerable wrangling in the Supreme Council, it was decided to order the invisible fleet to find and destroy their mysterious enemies.

After a diligent search, they were located in a wide crater, known to our astronomers as Ptolemy, whose location is in about the center of the moon's visible hemisphere. Ptolemy is one of the widest craters on our side of the moon. It is surrounded by a circular rim of very high mountains and the earth appears almost in the zenith at all times. This vast crater was the scene of unusual activity. Thousands of strange ships of space were anchored inside it, around which strange creatures, entirely unknown to the occupants of the invisible spheres, were working. Instead of attacking these unknown creatures, they merely photographed them and returned to report to their Zerko and the Supreme Council.

For some time their identity was a matter of conjecture, but at last, after searching through the meager records of the Vuduites when they were at their height on ancient Tiverpo, historians identified them as the Canzians.* The Selenites had never made an exploration of Canzian or Mars as we will call it. The red planet had never annoyed them and its inhabitants were believed to be peaceful, unless threatened with an invasion from other planets. In the remote past, about the time that the moon was first colonized by the Vuduites, the black race had tried to colonize Mars. They were unsuccessful because the strange inhabitants had made their objections so determined that every human being to touch Martian soil was killed by the strange inhabitants. For that reason, the moon had been colonized and Mars was left alone.

At later times, expeditions of Vuduites had investigated the planet, without approaching too closely. They had come to the conclusion that the planet was suffering its death-throes. The inhabitants had a hard task to remain alive. Only the surface of the planet was used and their water supply was barely sufficient to supply their needs, hence canals were used to bring the water from the melting ice caps of the poles and irrigate their deserts, in order to maintain life.

Mars had never been considered a menace by the Selenites, but ancient records of their former masters told them that Mars was the most dangerous planet of the entire solar system. Its inhabitants were very intelligent, probably equal or greater than the human race, but inasmuch as they did not resemble humanity in form, they would not hesitate to wipe them out of existence if an opportunity were offered. The Martians were known to be very warlike; they were constantly fighting among themselves and mercy was unknown to them. Their world was no longer able to support them; probably they were looking with envious eyes toward the other worlds. When they made their appearance on the moon and destroyed the only evidence of life they found, it was believed that they were planning to overrun the little world. When it was learned that they were doing something in the crater of Ptolemy, the invisible fleet was ordered to destroy them, without making any attempt to learn what they were doing.

Coming of the Martians

TO the Selenites, the Martians were very strange creatures. To a present day Terrestrial, they would be no less strange, but a name would be waiting for them. We would call them giant ants! In appearance, they resembled ants more than anything else, but their habits did not coincide with the habits of any known species of ants. The ant is known to have an intelligence, but he always does the same thing in the same way. The Martians possessed an intelligence greater than any ant known today and there was as much difference between individuals as there is between human beings. These Martians, who were about three feet long, were building cities in the crater of Ptolemy when first discovered. These cities were very crude; they resembled nothing more than the common anthills of the present day.

When the invisible fleet came to destroy them, they found that they were leaving their newly built cities in their long cigar-shaped space flyers. At once the Selenite commander radioed this information to his Zerko, who gave his orders to the fleet.

One invisible sphere remained behind to destroy the Martian cities and the other nine followed the strangers into outer space. It was soon learned that they were heading directly toward the earth. The Martians entered the terrestrial atmosphere near the North pole and quickly moved toward the eastern coast of Asia. As soon as the first human dwellings were found, the Martians attacked. Small bombs were dropped from the space flyers, which exploded and released a gas that paralyzed all living creatures. As soon as this gas would clear, a Martian ship would descend and the giant ants would devour the helpless human beings and animals, who were not dead, but living in an immovable condition that may well be called a living death. Apparently this strange gas paralyzed the motor nerves of the victim, leaving the sensory nervous system intact. It was believed that the victim could still see and hear all the terrors and feel all the agonies, but was unable to move a single muscle.

At first the Martians devoured all their victims, but after their appetites were satisfied, they would carry the helpless victims aboard their long ships, probably storing them away until such a time as food was scarce. The Selenites believed that the workers at their own power plants had suffered a similar fate. Several of the crew wanted to attack and destroy the Martians, which they were probably able to do with their invisible fleet and powerful weapons, but their commander failed to give his consent and no Martian ship was molested at that

* Canzian is the Selenite word for Martian.

time. The commander, while an ardent Militarist, has been branded a coward by the remainder of his crew and the more peaceful Selenites; unfortunately he never returned to his own world to answer to these charges.

The Asiatic Disaster

THE mixed races living in Eastern Asia were at the mercy of their foes. The Martian fleet, which numbered several thousand ships, now spread out over the inhabited regions, devouring their victims or storing them away. Like a plague they swept over the defenseless country; no living thing, plant or animal, was immune to the effect of the paralyzing effects of their gas bombs. Vegetation died after being exposed to the gas and the path of the Martians was easily traced across the doomed continent. Still the armed Selenite commander, in an invisible sphere out of the danger zone, continued to look idly on, while millions of men, women and children were meeting a fate far worse than death.

After the Martians learned that the Terrestrials were unable to fight their numerous ships, they abandoned the use of the gas bombs and attacked their victims in person. Against an army of giant ants, three feet in length, the terror-stricken inhabitants were powerless. It was only a matter of a few weeks until the country was as bare as a desert, devoid of either plant or animal life, while the raiding Martians had not lost a single ship. The invaders next turned their attention to the continent (now sunken) that once included the East Indies and Australia. The brown and black inhabitants of the vast region suffered a fate similar to that of their neighbors in Eastern Asia.

The Selenites to the Rescue!

THE Martians had moved westward into India and were busily engaged in laying waste the numerous small cities in that country. But while they were devouring or storing away the bodies of their victims, they met with a surprise. They were suddenly attacked from the air by hundreds of Vudu spheres. The Martians outnumbered their enemies forty to one; but one side was about as well armed as the other, and the Selenites saw that it was going to be a battle that would mean the extermination of one or the other of the opposing forces. They hated and feared both the Martians and the Vuduites, but their sympathies were with the human race. They had seen the destruction that had resulted when the Martians attacked the helpless cities of the yellow and brown people of Asia, and they knew that a similar fate awaited their own world if the Martians ever learned of their existence. As between the two hated races, they preferred to have the Vuduites as their future neighbors. Encouraged by the valiant attacks of the blacks, the Selenite commander was aroused to action. He ordered his invisible fleet to join forces with their erstwhile enemies and attack the Martians.

The Vuduites were excellent fighters. The Martians too fought well, but they were badly handicapped. They were out of their natural element and were far from being as efficient as they would have been had the battle taken place on their own world. The clouds and storms brought about by an excessive use of the disintegrating rays brought considerable trouble to them. But the Vuduites used the clouds to their own advantage; hiding among them, the blacks were able to attack unseen, without exposing themselves to danger. The storms brought several Martian ships to the ground with a crash, but the Vuduites had long since learned how to control their craft in all sorts of terrestrial weather. Considering that the blacks were outnumbered, the odds were about even; it was the Selenites in their invisible spheres who held the balance of power. Ancient hatreds were forgotten. Humanity was fighting against alien creatures for the right to continue its existence on its own world. Black and white fought side by side, even though the white did not dare let the blacks know of their presence.

The utter disregard for danger on both sides astounded the Selenites. The Martians and Vuduites would rush at each other, each heedless of the other's weapons, each determined to destroy their antagonists before the antagonist could destroy them. It was not uncommon to see a Vudu sphere rush into the midst of a group of Martians and attack the entire group, sending a score of the long space flyers to the ground before meeting destruction itself. More than once when a Vudu sphere was hard pressed by a number of Martians, an invisible sphere from the moon would go to its assistance. Many times a Vudu sphere would attack a number of Martians, only to find its enemies crashing to the Earth even before their weapons were brought into play, due to the efforts of their unseen allies.

It was the nine invisible spheres from the moon that turned the tide of the battle. From a safe elevation above the antagonists, they could direct their rays against the Martians with more effect than the entire Vudu fleet. One invisible sphere could come within a few thousand feet of any number of Martians and send them all to the ground, while the helpless invaders were looking in all directions for their mysterious enemies. Probably the Martians thought this was some uncanny weapon of the strange inhabitants of the larger world, while the Vuduites no doubt thought they were being aided by the supernatural powers of their deity.

Several habits of the Martians mystified the Vuduites and Selenites alike. Apparently there were a number of Martian ships that were not equipped for fighting. These ships always withdrew from the scene of battle, accompanied by a bodyguard of fighting ships. When one of these non-combatant Martian ships was endangered, the other fighting ships, regardless of what they were doing, came to its assistance. Seeing that they were disregarding their own safety in order to protect the larger ships, the Vuduites centered their attacks against the non-combatants. But it was soon seen that this was unwise, because attacks of that kind always drew a host of fighting ships to their assistance. The blacks then adopted other more effective tactics.

While feigning an attack against the favored Martians, the attention of the fighters was drawn aside, thus making excellent targets of them for other spheres. Seeing the tactics employed, the invisible Selenites' spheres aided the blacks in bringing hundreds of fighting Martians to the ground. Another habit of the Martians was to follow an enemy to the ground and capture the human occupants, or, in case there were no survivors, to take the dead bodies of their foes inside their own ships. Probably the Vuduites knew the fate in store for any victims taken in this manner. At any rate they never permitted a Martian ship to rise again if it were seen to descend near a fallen sphere.

The Selenites thought it probable that the aristocracy of the Martians were in the non-fighting ships. Prob-

ably the brains of the expedition were in these larger ships that were so well protected. If they were destroyed, would the Martians be without leaders? The Selenites did not know, but they determined to give the protected ships a surprise attack. Consequently an invisible sphere would take a position of safety directly above the ships to be attacked, and before the protectors could understand what was happening the Martian ship would crash toward the Earth. The protecting ships would now fly madly about like an enraged family of hornets, looking everywhere for something to attack and finding nothing. Meanwhile another of their favored ships would fall to the ground.

Retreat

THE last day of the battle was spent in this manner, while the Vuduites looked on from the protection of the clouds, far below the fighters. The Martians believed it was these spheres hiding in the clouds that were attacking from a distance. Their weapons were useless at long range, so they would rush toward the Vuduites, who were able to pick them off as fast as they came within range of their powerful rays. The Martians were now entirely on the defensive and saw that they were losing; a few more days, and their protected ships would all be lost. They never appeared to notice the loss of any number of fighting ships, but the loss of a non-combatant was terrible! Darkness was approaching and the Martians were making preparations for a retreat, but none of the human fighters understood their intentions.

The Martian ships were far speedier than the spheres of either race. Under cover of darkness and severe storms, they eluded their pursuers and disappeared. The next morning a diligent search was made for their enemies, but weeks passed before the Martians could be located, in a valley in Northern India. They had deserted their ships and taken refuge here in the dense vegetation, digging long tunnels into the ground and piling dirt near the entrances, thus making giant ant-hills, such as they had built in the crater of Ptolemy on the moon. The Vuduites watched them in wonder as they continued to labor. Apparently the Martians were entirely unaware of the spheres hovering only a short distance above them.

The war seemed to have been forgotten. The Martians were working day and night, more industriously than any creatures that had ever been seen or recorded by either race of humanity. Loose dirt continued to pile higher and higher around the entrances of their tunnels; ant-hills several hundred feet in height were taking form. At last all work stopped; the excavations were finished and their underground homes and cities completed. From the larger ships, those that had been so well protected during the recent battle, a number of larger winged Martians emerged. The observers did not understand the meaning of this, but to one who has studied the activities of ants, the process was very simple. These were the queen ants, the females of the species, whose sole purpose in life was to lay eggs to propagate their kind. The other Martians were all workers and fighters, whose individual lives were not of much value to the colony and probably of less value to themselves, inasmuch as they did nothing but toil and fight.

Accompanied by a bodyguard of dozens of fighters, armed with strange weapons, one queen made her way to each of the newly built tunnels. Very soon another task was begun. The workers had started to carry vegetation into the tunnels, while others carried the bodies and parts of bodies of the creatures that had been stored away in the Martian ships. Many of the bodies appeared to be still alive and it was believed that they had been kept in this state of living death for weeks by some strange artificial means, in order to prevent decay and decomposition. It was evident that food was being stored away for some future time.

On seeing the pictures of this scene, one is moved to compassion by the sight of men, women, children and various types of the lower animals being dragged underground by giant, cruel ants. One cannot help feeling indignant at the observers in the spheres above who stood idly by and did nothing but watch and photograph the sufferings of the human victims, going to a fate far worse than death. When questioned later, the Selenites could offer no explanation. They all had the same story namely, that they never once thought of their recent battle, nor did the thought occur to them that these Martians who were laboring so diligently should be attacked. They felt no pity for the victims at that time; they thought of them only as valuable articles of food, rather than as human beings. Probably it was due to some strange influence exerted by the Martians—some hypnotic power that could neither be overcome nor understood.

A Transformation

AT last giant ants by the thousands began to emerge from the ant-hills and scatter in all directions throughout the jungle. They seemed to be going nowhere in particular and everywhere in general, with no other purpose than to get as far away from the colonies as possible. The humans in the spheres above were now aroused to activity; they believed the Martians had prepared a trap for them, so they moved away from the giant ant-hills. They attacked the escaping ants one at a time, but the latter offered no resistance. No one had any idea of where they were going, nor why.

For several days they continued to stream out of the numerous tunnels in single file, only to scatter and hurry away through the jungle. Many miles away from their starting point, their rapid pace was checked and soon it stopped altogether. It was now seen that the escaping Martians were dead. The Selenites thought they had been unable to survive the effects of strange conditions of the new world. Probably the temperature, the climate, some unaccustomed condition of the atmosphere or even minute forms of bacteria, strange to the Martians, had killed them. Others thought they had died of starvation; they had not been seen to eat since the exodus from the ant-hills began. Others were of the opinion that they had died of fatigue; no creatures so active as these ants could maintain such strenuous lives for any length of time on a world whose gravity was much stronger than that to which they were accustomed. But I am of the opinion that these ants, the workers and fighters of the colonies, died by orders, probably from the queens. Their work was done and they were no longer needed; their future presence would be an expensive nuisance that would interfere with the plans of the Martian commanders.

The observers now returned to the ant-hills to see if the other Martians had died the same as the workers who had made such a hurried exit from the colonies. Here they met with a surprise that not only puzzled them, but has puzzled scientists of every age since that time. At first the ant-hills appeared to be deserted, but closer investigation showed that they were covered with minia-

ture Martians of various colors! Black, white, red, brown and gray ants, ranging in size from one-sixteenth to one-half an inch in length, were crawling about the entrances of the tunnels! Never before had ants of this size been seen. Were they young Martians, who would increase in size until they were three feet long? Would they then over-run the planet and make it their own? Could humanity survive when this took place?

Both races were puzzled. The Vuduites took steps to prevent such a catastrophe. Heat-rays were directed against the ant-hills, destroying the tiny Martians by the million, but the advantage of the Martians now lay in their minute size and their vast numbers. They could hide in the vegetation and deep in their excavations and thus escape extermination. Already the smaller ants were at work with their own excavations, building their smaller colonies under the dense jungle vegetation. The Vuduites evidently thought it would be out of the question to completely destroy all of them. After killing ants for weeks, they were ready to quit. Probably they thought the little creatures would still grow to maturity and produce giant Martians.

A number of their spheres, having captured several of the tiny creatures, returned to Africa, probably expecting to study the smaller ants and learn what they could about them. Several spheres remained behind to watch the movements of the ants and to be on the scene if there were any unusual developments. There were about two hundred of the original Martian ships still in the valley. No evidence of life was to be seen around them after the Martians had taken to their new underground colonies. After giving them a thorough examination and carrying several types of Martian machines inside their own spheres for further study, they began to destroy the long Martian ships of space. But ten ships, those nearest to the ant-hills, were undamaged. The blacks were apparently leaving them for a purpose.

The Selenites could not understand the meaning of the recent events. They knew that the Martians were working out a carefully laid plan, but for what purpose? Did they hope to take possession of the Earth and the moon, and abandon their own worn-out planet? It was only by a long and careful study that they were able to arrive at any definite conclusions. They were astounded to learn that certain Martians were eager to sacrifice themselves in order that other more favored individuals might live. They believed the workers were either obedient slaves, unable to have a will of their own, or else they differed radically from creatures such as themselves. It had often been shown that the instinct of self-preservation was the strongest instinct of any living creatures. Preservation of the race came second. With these Martians, preservation of the race appeared to be their paramount purpose in life. If this were the correct theory, the following solution must also be correct.

Their own planet was no longer able to support them. They planned to establish colonies on the two worlds nearest their own, in order that their race might survive. After establishing colonies on the moon, they turned their attention to the larger world. Here they realized that their former size was not adapted to the prevailing conditions of the Earth, hence they accomplished in one generation something that would have taken Nature ages to duplicate through her usual process of evolution. Their strange knowledge, brought from a strange world by strange creatures that had developed along lines different from those of humanity, had enabled the Martians to change their size during a single generation. The queens and their few attendants had seen to it that their offspring had matured before reaching their usual size. Probably this was done by a different kind of food, perhaps by some intentional characteristic of the eggs—no one ever knew. But in their smaller size, the Martians were better adapted to terrestrial conditions. The larger force of gravity was to their advantage; they could find an abundance of food, and there were fewer enemies to annoy them. The Selenites were positive that the Martians had scientific knowledge, which in this respect was infinitely greater than their own.

CHAPTER VIII

The Return to Mars

SEVERAL weeks had passed with no unusual developments at the ant-hills. The small ants were as busy as their parents had ever been, digging tunnels into the ground and building thousands of small mounds. They appeared to be unable to notice the human beings in the vicinity; this may have been due to some defect in their eyes or possibly to an indifference about things that were beyond their sphere of usefulness. The human observers were no longer paying much attention to the little creatures. Days would pass without giving them even a casual glance. But at last it was noticed that something unusual was happening with the ten remaining Martian space-flyers. The Vuduites and Selenites were now all attention. Had the larger Martians returned? Or had some of the tiny creatures grown to the original size? Had a new group of giant workers been hatched out and matured in the larger colonies? Whatever the explanation, it was evident that giant ants were at work inside the ships of space, preparing them for a voyage of some kind. Were they planning another raid against the human inhabitants? If they were, the war would begin anew, and this time it would continue until the last Martian had been destroyed.

One morning the observers could see that vast numbers of giant Martians were emerging from the larger ant-hills and marching in single file into the remaining ships of space. When the ships were filled, they rose slowly from the ground, followed by the visible and invisible spheres. The ten Martian ships rose directly toward the zenith, followed at a safe distance by the spheres. No attack was made at this time; the Martians were very peaceful, and the Vuduites more curious than warlike. The Selenites remained just far enough behind to be able to see the others. They were less experienced in astronautics than the others and feared the planetary swirl,* through which their earlier expeditions were not able to pass when attempting to land near the equator. They thought it would be just as impossible to leave the planet at that point as it had been to make a landing. No doubt they thought both the Martians and the Vuduites would meet destruction, so they remained farther behind.

But the Selenites were to learn that the planetary swirl did not affect a space ship passing outward. The gale of rarefied air moving at one thousand miles per hour did not affect a body that was moving at the same rate of speed. The effect was no more noticeable than if the sphere were motionless on the surface of the planet.

It was soon seen that the Martians were leaving the earth. They rose higher and higher, increasing their speed as the atmosphere became thinner; the spheres

*The fact that the earth carries its atmosphere with it on its rotation on its axis causes a swirl of swiftly moving air which is hard to enter or leave.

had all they could do to remain within sight of them. The Vuduites probably knew that the Martians were returning to their own planet, but the Selenites, being less experienced in interplanetary travel, had no idea of their destination. They felt certain that it was not Mars, because that ruddy planet was to be seen far to one side. They did not realize that instead of going directly toward a body that was traveling almost as fast as they were themselves, the Martians were heading toward that point in the orbit of Mars where the planet would be when they arrived.

The voyage required several weeks, and for the first time white men were piloting gravity-controlled spaceships outside the effect of the gravity of any of the heavenly bodies. There was one time when the sun exerted the only noticeable gravitational influence. But I can not hope to give full details of this voyage across space. Difficulties presented themselves, but were overcome with ease by the Selenites, who merely followed the visible and more experienced ships of space. At times the others were so far ahead that they could not be seen, but other means were utilized to point out the direction of the nearest ships. At last they came near the planet Mars. Hurtling along as it was, at a tremendous rate of speed, it looked as if it would be impossible to make a landing on it. The feat was comparable to that of a fly trying to land on a flying cannon-ball! But the Selenites were more scientific than any known species of flies.

The other ships were far ahead, in fact entirely out of sight. Of the three types of space flyers, the invisible Selenite ships were the slowest. The Martians had probably made a landing, but the Selenites could not see how it had been done. The Vuduites were no longer in sight and the Selenites, felt deserted, many millions of miles from home! The planet was now getting farther and farther away from Earth, and they could not move much faster than the planet itself. Their only remedy was to set out in determined pursuit of the escaping world. After a period of time that can not be definitely established, the planet was overtaken and the Selenites entered the thin Martian atmosphere near one of the poles. Several days were spent in flying over the barren surface of the dying world before any evidence of life was found.

The Battle on Mars

EVERY form of life on Mars was very strange to the Selenite, but the only form to have any degree of intelligence was the giant ants. All others acted like domesticated animals, beasts of burden or living food supplies for the dominating species. No time will be taken in describing Martian life or Martian conditions. The Selenites were searching for but one thing, and it was some time before they found it.

They arrived on the scene in time to see the last of the Vudu spheres go crashing to destruction on the surface of the dying planet. It can not be said that they sympathized very much with their ancient enemies, but at the same time they could see the danger of letting the Martians think the raid against the other worlds had been a success. The air was full of Martian ships and there was no way of knowing which of the thousands had been to the Earth. Consequently the Selenite commander gave orders to destroy all: this would convince the giant ants that the Earth and its satellite were dangerous worlds, and that it would be much safer to stay away from them in the future.

The work of destruction was started. It was no difficult task for the invisible spheres, equipped with many powerful weapons unknown to the Martians, to approach any number of ships and turn unseen rays of destruction against them. But on account of the great number of Martian ships, the battle lasted for some time. There was no way of knowing just what the Martians thought about it, but it can not be questioned that they were surprised when they saw their vast navies destroyed by apparently supernatural means, before their very eyes! An attempt to escape was their only means of protecting themselves, but it was not so easy to escape from invisible enemies. They did not know which way to go and often they unknowingly came closer to their enemies when they thought they were going away from them.

For ten days the battle continued. Even at night the Martians were safe neither in their ships nor in their cities. By the time the Selenites were satisfied with their work, the planet was in ruins, or at least the inhabited portions were demolished. The Selenites had never been in any great danger, thanks to their unseen spheres. Nine spheres had entered the battle, and nine came out unscathed.

The battle ended and the work of destruction over, the Selenites spent several days in exploring the strange planet. They did not find much of interest because the majority of the survivors had mysteriously disappeared into their underground cities. Whenever a Martian appeared on the surface, he was in danger of the death-dealing rays from the nine invisible space flyers somewhere on his world. The Selenites were now convinced that there would never be any more danger from Mars. They felt that they had convinced the Martians that it would be wiser for them to try to continue an existence on their own world, rather than to attempt to steal other planets. Satisfied with their work, they decided to return home.

This was a much more difficult task than the journey to Mars, because they had no experienced ships to guide them. They had spent too much time on the red planet. The Martians had chosen the proper time to return home, Mars and Earth having been in conjunction at that time, with the distance between them a trifle less than forty million miles. But after the battle above Martian soil, the two planets had both moved in their orbits and the distance was now much greater. The Selenites would have been wise to wait until the movements of the two planets had been determined and their path through space plotted, but they were poor astronomers—astronomy being a neglected science at that period in lunar history. Spending the majority of their lives in their underground apartments, many of their race had lived and died without ever seen the sun or any of the stars. Inasmuch as the Earth could be seen from only one side of their world, a larger percentage of their population had never seen anything but the pictures of the most beautiful object in their skies. Their knowledge of astronautics concerned only the voyages between the moon and the Earth, and this knowledge was inadequate for a voyage from Mars to their own world. A poor astronomer makes a poorer astronaut, and the Selenite had much to learn about both these sciences.

Back to Earth

THE invisible fleet had no trouble in identifying the planet Earth, toward which they now directed their craft. The Earth and the moon continued in their common orbit at the rate of 18½ miles per second, and the

voyagers soon saw that they were not making much progress. Without knowing it, they crossed the orbit of the Earth and the elusive planet concealed itself behind the sun! Several times the invisible ships were separated; it was never possible for them to see one another, and it was only by magnetic compasses and radio that they could locate each other. At great distances the radio signals were too weak to be recognized and their magnetic compasses often lied to them. If an iron-bearing meteor happened to be nearer, they would point toward that instead of a space ship. At one time a swarm of meteors threatened to demolish the entire fleet, and it was only by changing their course that they avoided this fate. Venus at one time appeared brighter than the Earth and the commander mistook it for the Earth. He directed the invisible fleet toward the wrong planet, and it was not until he observed that it had no moon that he saw his mistake.

They had spent almost a year in outer space on their return voyage. Their supplies were nearly exhausted and the crew was just about insane. It was seen that the commander could not be trusted. His intentions were good enough, but his knowledge of astronautics was too limited. Another commander was therefore selected, but as the old one refused to obey his orders, mutiny threatened—a greater disaster than that of being lost in outer space!

The original commander retained command of his own sphere, but the remaining eight obeyed the new leader, who was able to change the course of the fleet and to move it nearer to its destination. After coming within a million miles of the Earth, they were confronted with another problem. The Earth was moving at the rate of 18½ miles per second around the sun, and the moon was moving at the rate of .64 miles per second around the earth. To make a landing, both of these motions had to be taken into consideration, and it was some time before this feat was successfully accomplished by the eight spheres. The original commander and one sphere were never again heard of.

The Selenites were astounded by the pictures that showed every detail of their remarkable adventures. The voyagers learned that soon after leaving the moon in pursuit of the Martians, numerous colonies of Martians had matured in the crater of Ptolemy. But in this case, they were not of such small sizes. On the contrary, the resulting generation was over ten feet in length, but fortunately their numbers were not so great. The Martians had probably thought that creatures of this size would be better adapted to the low lunar gravity, and it would be easier for them to find food and live in safety on the little world. But this single colony on the moon was short-lived. One invisible sphere had no difficulty in completely destroying it.

CHAPTER IX

The Calm That Precedes a Storm

THE Martian War was ended and still the Selenites knew nothing of the conditions of the black race. The Militarists were more restless than ever: "The Vuduites must be exterminated!" they cried. "There shall be no more war!" the Pacifists declared. "This shall be a war to end war," the Militarists replied. In the Supreme Council and among the citizens, the argument continued between the two opposing forces. For a time it looked as if a civil war would break out between the two elements. The Martian War had demonstrated that a few invisible ships, equipped with rays of destruction, were more powerful than any fleet of visible ships that could be assembled. The Militarists knew that they had the weapons and they were anxious to use them against the race that had caused them so much suffering a few centuries earlier.

But there is always a bond of friendship between allied nations. The fact that the blacks and whites had fought side by side against an alien world had created a warm feeling against a race that had always been hated and feared. After doing a great favor for someone, one always has a warm feeling toward that person. The Pacifists had no desire to see the extermination of the race that had been aided during the Martian war. "We do not know that the Vuduites are a menace to our world," they argued. "Let us send an invisible fleet to Barlenkoz and learn the true condition before we decide to exterminate them. Perhaps they are having trouble enough with those tiny Martians who have established colonies on their planet."

The Zerko was finally influenced to authorize an expedition of invisible spheres to make an investigation of the prevailing conditions of the black race. After spending one year on the Earth, the expedition returned with pictures showing the pitiful condition of the Vuduites. The blacks were now putting up a desperate fight for their own existence. Their supremacy was broken, their slaves were free and countless enemies threatened them on all sides. A race that had never known anything but luxury and idleness for thousands of years found itself unable to cope with its host of enemies. Unskilled in manual labor, they had never been able to rebuild the cities destroyed during the first war of the worlds, when their slaves rebelled and escaped. The protecting walls around their cities were no longer able to keep back the carnivores who preyed upon the helpless blacks.

Africa was still the center of culture and civilization, but that civilization was only a caricature of the ancient glories of the great black race. The torrid climate had increased their lazy tendencies; their buildings were in ruins and they lacked the initiative to rebuild them. Their sewer systems had gone to ruin, and disease added to the adverse conditions of progress. Their escaped slaves were carrying on an existence as savage cavemen, living amid their enemies through the power of their muscles and the cunning of their untaught and dormant minds. These tribes of fierce white men enjoyed attacking their former masters, breaking down the crumbling walls of the Vudu cities and carrying away as plunder anything they desired. The blacks still maintained a fleet of spheres, such as they had used during the Martian War, and they frequently attacked the whites, who scattered and hid as soon as a sphere was seen in the sky. The Vuduites were accomplishing nothing by these attacks except to make life miserable for their enemies.

Around all the inland seas of the western part of the vast continent that included all of Eurasia and Africa, two races were struggling for supremacy. The whites, whose only weapons were their own muscular strength, cunning minds and an inherited hatred toward their former masters, were forced to protect themselves continually from the blacks, who had fallen heir to scientific knowledge and a number of scientific weapons from their proud and illustrious ancestors. It was a struggle for survival, and the Selenites could not decide which race was the more fit to survive. Skilled muscles and untaught minds were fighting against scientific minds and untrained hands. The odds were about even, but

if anything, the scientific Vuduites had the advantage.

In Asia, the invisible fleet found that there were a few survivors of the recent Martian raids, who showed great promise of rebuilding what had been destroyed. In Northern India, the tiny ants were as busy as ever. Unmolested by any of the larger creatures, they were spreading over the country, threatening to build their tiny colonies all over the earth. But the Selenites were convinced that with their small size they could do no great damage.

The Pacifists Win

AFTER the Militarists had learned the condition of their ancient enemies, their strength began to fail. It was evident that the Vuduites had their hands full, protecting themselves on their own world, and there was no danger of another attack, particularly if they never learned of the existence of the Selenites. But the Militarists still spread their propaganda and demanded vengeance for the imprisonment that had followed the first war of the worlds. They declared that their own race would never be safe until the Vudus had been exterminated. The Pacifists remained in control, and they maintained that no good would come of the destruction of a race that was unaware of the existence of the Selenites. On the moon a battle of words constantly raged, while on the Earth the blood of both races continued to flow. At various times the Militarists would attempt to exterminate the black race by themselves. With visible spheres they raided the blacks and made their lives more miserable, but that was about all they accomplished. The Vuduites were better fighters than the Selenites, and in a battle with rays from gravity-controlled spheres, the blacks were more in their own natural element. Many of the private expeditions against the Vuduites never returned, and those that did return were often in a pitiful condition. These raids were always opposed by the pacifists and never sanctioned by the Supreme Council, but the Zerko and the Supreme Council had no jurisdiction over them when they were away from their own world; consequently the raiders were never punished.

It was almost 10,000 years ago, in the year 24,640 A.D. (not Anno Domini, "in the year of our Lord," but "After the Destruction") that the Pacifists won a complete victory over the Militarists. It was decreed by the Supreme Council that: "In the future no Selenites are to be permitted to visit or make an exploration of Barlenkoz, unless the visit or expedition is accompanied and commanded by the Zerko, Crown Prince, or persons appointed by the Zerko and approved by the Supreme Council." It was also decreed that: "It shall be the duty of each Zerko, either before or immediately after his coronation, to see that the menacing planet is explored and accurate reports made as to the condition and extent of civilization of all branches of the Barlenkozian branch of the human race."

These laws were made with a view to putting a stop to the raids against a powerful enemy who had caused untold suffering among the Selenites in the past, as well as for the purpose of obtaining information and warning of any immediate danger from the world that they continued to fear. The Militarists were disappointed. For many years they tried in every way possible to have the decision of the Supreme Council overruled by the citizens, but all such attempts had ended in failure. At last Zerko Haniks commanded that all Militarist propaganda cease. For a number of years it looked as though his orders were being obeyed; the Militarists were very quiet.

But it is always very quiet just before a storm. The Militarists were apparently pacified, but the Zerko, the Supreme Council and the Pacifist party had excellent reasons to suspect that trouble was brewing. Krago, the leader of the Militarists, had just married the twin sister of Zerko Haniks. He was an ardent advocate of "woman's rights" and insisted that she had as good or better right to the crown than her brother, whom she always opposed in everything he attempted. On the moon, as well as in our own world, there is truth in the saying: "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

Zerko Haniks was in constant fear of his unruly sister and her new husband, who had often remarked that after he obtained the throne, his deeds would rival those of the first Zerko, who had saved his people from the terrors of the Destruction. The true character of Krago has never yet been determined. Even to the present day there are Selenites who regard him as the greatest man, the most capable leader, and the greatest militarist his world has ever produced. He has been given credit for saving his world from the Vuduites and making the moon safe for his own race. Others paint him as a fiend incarnate, entirely lacking in any sense of fair play and the greatest criminal in human history. Compared to Krago, Caesar and Napoleon were weaklings and Nero was an angel.

For a time Krago and his bride pretended to abide by the decision of Zerko Haniks and the Supreme Council, but inwardly they rebelled and planned to accomplish the destruction of the black race with the aid of those friends whom he could trust. They lost no time in calling the Militarists together and selecting a group who promised to follow Krago and save their world in spite of the blindness of the peace-loving Zerko and his Supreme Council. Thousands of followers pledged everything they owned, including their lives and those of their families if need be, to save their world from another raid from the black Barlenkozian Vuduites. From this group of loyal followers, leaders were selected and a secret expedition to the menacing world was planned.

The plans were made and put into execution so secretly that no one suspected their true nature. But the Pacifists thought Krago and his party were too quiet to be out of mischief; they were positive that something was taking place. Zerko Haniks was certain that his crown was in danger. He was thinking only of his own personal safety. At last Krago and his followers disappeared Believing that they had retired to some inaccessible part of their own world for the purpose of marshalling their forces and attempting to overthrow the government, the Zerko began to make preparations for his own defense. For over a year Krago had not been seen or heard of. The little world was so peaceful, everything was so quiet and the suspense so terrible that Zerko Haniks was in constant danger of a nervous breakdown. But while his spies were making every effort to locate his enemies, astronomers made the discovery that something strange was taking place on the Earth!

Clouds had covered the surface of the larger world to such an extent that no telescope could obtain a glimpse of the surface. Several lunar days passed and the clouds seemed to increase rather than scatter. At times a momentary glimpse was to be had of a white snow-covered surface of the Earth! At other times the clouds would part long enough to show that the surface was afire! Zerko Haniks was about to send an expedition to the

Earth to learn the true state of affairs when Krago suddenly appeared on the scene with pictures and a story that surpassed all records for human daring, and wanton destructiveness. He was proud of the fact that he had destroyed the power of the ancient enemies of his race and reduced a great civilization to a lower level than that of any creature that ever walked or crawled. He declared that he had made his own world safe for posterity and demanded that the peace-loving Zerko abdicate the throne in favor of his sister and her capable husband.

CHAPTER X

Krago's War

FROM the pictures and story brought back by Krago's expedition, the Selenites learned the facts of the disasters that had resulted in the final and complete downfall of the great race of Vuduites. After his own defeat by the Pacifists, Krago had made his plans for destroying the enemies of his race and eliminating the threatened danger from the giant Barlenkoz. From the wealth of his followers, he had raised enough capital to put his plans into execution. At that time there were fifty invisible space flyers on the moon. After laws had been passed making it unlawful for private citizens to visit the Earth, all invisible spheres were purchased or confiscated by the Zerko. They were stored away in a large inaccessible cavern, the location of which was known only to the Zerko and a few of his intimate friends and advisors. Zerko Haniks was afraid that his enemies were spying on him and if he were to be seen visiting the fleet, its location would be discovered. For that reason the invisible navy was seldom visited.

But there was a traitor whom the Zerko trusted. He had always been a loyal Pacifist, but for some reason, probably bribery, he secretly joined the ranks of Krago and the Militarists. He informed Krago that the invisible navy had been hidden in a vast cavern, accessible only from an obscure crater in an uninhabited region on the barren surface of an ancient sea bottom. Krago then had no difficulty in stealing the spheres and using them for his own purpose. Had Zerko Kaniks known that his invisible navy was in Krago's hands, it is doubtful if he would have enjoyed a minute of sleep during the absence of his enemy. As a matter of fact, the Zerko never visited the cavern during that period and the fleet was never missed.

Krago had no trouble in securing a crew for this vast fleet from the ranks of the defeated Militarists, who welcomed an opportunity to aid in the realization of their fondest dream, the destruction of the remaining Vudu civilization. Many of his followers had come from the criminal class, others were ardent Militarists who believed they were doing something great for their own world, while many were young men who joined the expedition merely for the love of adventure. It is interesting to note that over one-third of the crew were of the fair sex.

Downfall

THE fleet of fifty invisible spheres entered the terrestrial atmosphere near the South Pole and moved swiftly toward the Cape of Good Hope. As the African continent was reached, the spheres scattered and moved across the continent toward the north, searching diligently for the cities of the Vuduites. When a village was located, the invisible raiders directed a powerful heat-ray upon it. Within a few minutes the inflammable parts of the town were afire and in many cases the stone buildings were so heated that they flowed like molten lava. The surrounding forests were always touched with the heat-ray because they were usually full of refugees. The spheres were acting under orders to destroy everything that could be destroyed, thus wiping out a race that was both hated and feared.

When the first city of the Vuduites had been discovered by the first expedition from the moon, over twenty thousand years earlier, the blacks had been more than a match for the Selenites. During the first war of the worlds, the Vuduites had proved that they were more efficient fighters than the raiders. During the Martian War it had been demonstrated that the blacks still continued to be better fighters than the Selenites, and that it was invisibility alone that had enabled nine spheres from the moon to turn the tide of the battle. After the perfection of invisibility, however, each private raid had found the blacks more defenseless. During Krago's war, the defense was nil. The sole hope of the Vuduites lay in their efforts to escape, and the Selenites prevented many of them from doing this. During previous raids, the white and mixed population had been spared, but Krago saw a menace in any form of Barlenkozian civilization. He therefore determined to spare no one except the fierce savage cave-men, and he was not very particular about sparing them either. Throughout the African Continent white villages were scattered among the black. Krago did not take the trouble to inquire whether his victims were black or white; his plans called for a complete extermination of all possible enemies.

It has been shown that the black civilization was on decline, and that many of their scientific secrets were lost. Even without Krago's war it is doubtful whether or not they would ever again have become a menace to the Selenites. The Pacifists did not fear them, but this raid was being conducted by Militarists who insisted that: "The Barlenkozians must be exterminated!" For several days the work of exterminating the Barlenkozians progressed very nicely. The little resistance that was offered only amused the raiders, but to a non-combatant it was very pathetic. Spheres rose from several of the doomed cities to meet their invisible enemies, only to go crashing toward the ground a few minutes later. What manner of man can fight against unknown and unseen enemies? How long could a civilization such as our own withstand such attacks? How long before our populace would be too terror-stricken to act intelligently? Would not a large proportion of our people do exactly as did these ancient blacks and implore the only deity known to the race to save them from the mysterious foes?

That is just what the blacks did. As the news spread that the raiders were again at work, sacrifices were offered to the images of their Sun-god. But for ages the Sun-god had failed to hear their supplications. Only during the Martian War had their deity helped them, and many doubtless felt that the Sun-god was responsible for their suffering. Consequently Vudu, the ancient name of their deity, was feared and hated by some tribes and the inherited fear of "Voodoo," a mysterious, black, evil spirit still survives among many of their present day descendants. Perhaps it is due to the fact that black ideas were shared by the whites during their slavery and probably for centuries afterwards, that the fear of this mysterious evil entity forms a part of the belief of more enlightened people even to this day.

As the Vuduite craft rose feebly against unseen foes, they were picked off by the raiders and sent crashing to the ground. The Selenites were now using their dis-

integrating rays almost as much as the more favored heat-ray, with the result that storms covered the entire continent. This made the work of the raiders harder, because their spheres were unmanageable in a severe storm. But it also made the condition of the few blacks who had escaped into the jungle more miserable, and they continued to use it whenever possible. The storms extinguished the jungle fires caused by the heat-rays. This pleased the raiders, because the smoke often hid entire villages from the raiders, and the fires were taking a heavy toll of the wild carnivores. Krago had no desire to destroy any enemies of his victims.

Africa in Ruins

BY the time Africa had been covered by the raiders, one of the severest storms of all time was raging over the stricken continent. During this storm the Selenites had found safety high above the clouds and it is certain that many of the blacks escaped from the scene of the disaster in their own sphere. Probably they found safety on the Australian Continent, far to the east. Inasmuch as their descendants are still to be found in that region, it is probable that their ancestors were refugees from Africa, probably during Krago's war or some of the other raids. The Selenites were too busy keeping their own craft under control and they could not prevent the escape of the spheres full of black refugees.

With the destruction of the last city south of the ancient Sahara Sea, Africa was in ruins. A great race had fallen and an ancient and wondrous civilization had perished, probably never again to be rebuilt. The wild carnivores now reigned supreme in their own natural element. Masters of their environment, they had outlived the weaker black bipeds from another world.

Throughout the vast storm-swept continent, small groups of black refugees were seeking safety from the carnivores and shelter from the chilling rain, under the trees and amid the luxuriant jungle vegetation. The darkness of night was approaching and the day of horrors was ended. The refugees could not see behind the clouds that continued to spill torrents of water over the devastated continent, but they knew that the sun was setting. The day of horrors had passed and the day of their great race was gone forever.

For hours the thunder continued to roll and the lightning to flash from one horizon to the other, while the chilling rains descended in torrents upon thousands of naked and unsheltered blacks. In the comforts of modern homes, the reader can not imagine the suffering and terror of a small group of these pathetic figures, representative of the survivors of the once proud and mighty race. Somewhere in the north they could hear the sound of an angry bull elephant's trumpeting. Far in the south the roar of a lion caused the earth to tremble. In the west a cry of mingled terror and pain told that some feline mistress of the jungle had found her supper.

In the trees overhead, excited chattering of the rain-soaked monkeys told of the presence of immediate danger. A violent splashing in the nearby river, swollen by the torrents of rain, told that the crocodile—another master of his environment—was satisfying his hunger. In the east the lightning continued to flash and the thunders to roll.

On the ground, slightly protected from the fury of the storm by the dense vegetation, a tiny mite of humanity was crying as his mother clasped her man-child close to her own ebony breast.

Did this wee baby understand the significance of the situation? Did he know that the ancient glories of his own mighty and illustrious fathers was now forever lost? Did he realize that henceforth he, his brothers, his children and his posterity must face the cruel forces of nature as he was facing them tonight? Did he know that the future existence of his race depended upon its ability to fight claws and fangs with muscle and brawn plus that remaining spark of something—inherited from a long line of scientific ancestors—called intelligence, which time, nature, invisible raiders and the living perils of the jungle could never wipe out?

Was that the reason the sound of his wailings rivaled the voice of the thunders and the cries of the wild masters of the jungle, supreme in their own natural element? Or did he cry because he was cold, hungry and unsheltered, tasting for the first time in his life the brutality of a world of strife, trouble, fear and pain, which was now the common heritage of his race?

CHAPTER XI

Krago's Wife

BY the most trivial of incidents many momentous events of history have been determined. A sudden change in the weather has decided the tide of many a battle. The destiny of nations has been changed by matters as small as a loose shoe on the foot of a horse ridden by a famous general. The geography and physical conditions of the Eastern Hemisphere were altered by an incident too trivial to deserve mention: the fact that Krago had brought his wife with him on an expedition of war and destruction.

No doubt this seemed a perfectly natural and proper thing to do, as hundreds of Krago's warriors were doing the same thing. At that time women had been given equal rights in everything and they were making the most of their new opportunities. But the presence of such a distinguished social personage as Fisoka, twin sister of Zerko Haniks and wife of Krago, almost made a pleasure party out of an expedition organized for war and destruction. Fisoka considered herself a great help to her husband, but older men in the expedition, who were more experienced with the fair sex, soon saw that there would be difficulty in keeping the mind of their general on his work. Krago had entrusted all the problems of astronautical navigation to his lieutenants and had intended to let them command the spheres on the vast African battle front in order that he might devote his personal attention to the pleasure of Fisoka. They were together constantly; as Krago instructed his subordinates and pointed out the location of known cities on the map, his wife affectionately looked over his shoulder and offered advice that proved to be more decisive than useful.

It is not my purpose to write a love story. I would not do it even if I knew all the details of this ancient romance. I merely record that the presence of Fisoka upon our planet decided the fate of the future geography and history of our Earth. At the advice of older men in the expedition, one sphere was turned over for the personal use of the wife of the commander-in-chief. Her sphere was not permitted to endanger its distinguished passengers by visiting the scene of battle, but radio and television kept her informed of the progress her distinguished husband was making. To avoid all possible danger, the sphere moved along the more peaceful West Coast of Africa, while the remainder of the fleet was spreading death, confusion and destruction among the helpless blacks.

By the time the last city south of the Sahara Sea was destroyed, storms of unheard-of fury were raging over the entire continent. Alarmed for the safety of his wife, whose radio signals could no longer be heard on account of the storm, Krago ordered the fighting to stop until the weather had become more settled. Fisoka, becoming alarmed at the storms, which were entirely unknown on her own world, broadcast a call for help. When her signals were heard and recognized, Krago ordered the entire fleet to go to her rescue.

He was overjoyed to learn that his wife had suffered no ill effects from the storms. Then Fisoka suggested a celebration in honor of the victories of her husband over the Vuduites. Among the Selenites a celebration could be started without much excuse, so it was not long until the fleet of invisible raiders had become a fleet of joy-makers.

Meanwhile the weather had cleared and the Selenites were enjoying the beautiful Barlenkozian scenery. They were very much impressed by the beauty of the sun turning to a dull red—in a sky filled with fleecy clouds—and dropping behind the distant waters of the Atlantic. It was a remarkable contrast to the sunsets of their own world, where the sun requires hours to drop the distance of his own diameter and slowly touches the barren horizon without even slightly dimming his brilliant rays. The Barlenkozian twilight was very beautiful in comparison with the sudden contrast from bright day to the darkness of night. The blue terrestrial sky was a source of wonder to the ladies, who had never before seen anything but a sky of inky blackness, filled with countless stars, even during their long day.

But it was the sunrise that most impressed Krago and his bride. It was while observing a sunrise of unusual beauty that a strange discovery was made. Between the rising sun and the tiny mountain range over which the sphere was hovering, there was a vast deep valley. As Fisoka turned toward the west to observe the shadows cast by the dull morning sun, she remarked to Krago that it looked as if the level of the sea was much higher than the deep valley to the east. As Krago looked, his eyes confirmed her opinion, but he knew that it was a scientific impossibility for dry land so close to the vast sea to be below the level of the sea. What was to prevent the waters of the sea from filling the valley? It was undoubtedly an optical illusion, a trick of the strange Barlenkozian atmosphere, and their eyes were being deceived. But Fisoka's feminine intuition told her that she had made a wonderful discovery. The valley was far below the level of the Atlantic.

A Great Idea

FISOKA called her friends to settle the family argument. They decided unanimously in favor of Fisoka; she had made a wonderful discovery. Krago sent several spheres to explore the valley and ascertain its size. Two days later they returned with the report that the valley extended toward the east for a distance believed to be greater than the diameter of their own little world! They were unable to agree upon its exact size, but it was certain that they had seen the inland seas, around which had once existed the greatest center of Vudu civilization. It was reported that parts of the valley were still inhabited by their ancient enemies, but there were countless white settlements and in many cases the whites appeared to be in a more enlightened condition than their former masters. This report aroused Krago to action; he was tiring of too much idleness and was anxious to resume his warfare and lay waste the vast valley. The invisible fleet was made ready to depart and as usual Fisoka was to remain behind in a zone of safety.

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if you didn't have to leave me and destroy those terrible Barlenkozians?" Fisoka asked, as Krago was bidding her good-bye for what was supposed to be the last time.

"Yes, darling," Krago would answer, "but I have to do my duty. I'd much rather stay here with you than risk my life on the field of battle."

"Why couldn't we cut a narrow channel from the valley to that vast sea? The water would fill the valley and exterminate the Vudus in it more easily and thoroughly than you could do it," she asked.

"A marvelous idea!" Krago exclaimed. "That is just what we shall do. What a spectacular scene it will make for you and the other ladies! Why didn't I think of it sooner?"

Another celebration followed the birth of this idea, and the execution of the plans followed the celebration. Fisoka was given the honor of directing the first of the heat-rays against the narrow wall that had protected the valley from the Atlantic for countless ages. But accidents occurred; the invisible spheres working so excitedly in such close quarters were constantly getting in the way of each other. The invisibility that had protected them during the African campaign was now against them. They could not see each other and were either colliding or getting in the way of the heat-rays from other spheres. For this reason, work on the channel stopped until the spheres were sprayed with a substance resembling red paint, after which they could be easily seen.

The fleet of fifty spheres now began work at the extreme eastern extremity of the proposed channel. For days they melted the rock and permitted it to flow down the mountainside into the deeper parts of the valley. They were cutting a channel whose width was over a mile at the narrowest pitch, which was the place where they had to cut through the highest part of the hills. After working for several days, the channel was taking form, but the molten rock ceased to flow into the valley. Their channel had become clogged and it was necessary to begin again and cut a deeper channel through the artificial lava that had cooled and clogged the stream, before the fiery stream of molten rock would move away of its own free will. For the second time the work was resumed, and for the second time the stream was clogged.

The task was bigger than they had expected. A family argument took place between Fisoka and the commander-in-chief. He claimed that she was responsible for his starting the impossible task; to please her he had had the spheres painted and they were no longer invisible, hence it was too dangerous to attack the inhabitants of the valley from the air as the Africans had been attacked. Fisoka advanced the argument that no one but a coward would refuse to fight unless he was invisible and all manner of unkind words passed between the couple that had so recently been pointed out as an example of a perfectly happy union.

Of course Krago was angry. He declared that he would finish the task he had started in spite of all the women in the solar system! He ordered his warriors to use their disintegrating rays and again clean out the channel and to use the same rays for the remainder of

the work, in spite of the resulting storms and discomfort of the ladies. He would show a certain party that he was not a quitter!

Several times the work had to be delayed on account of the raging storms caused by the disintegration of the atmosphere in the path of the powerful rays. At times the spheres were almost uncontrollable and the fleet had to retire to a higher altitude for safety. The moon traveled two and one half times around the earth while the vast channel was being cut through. The people of the valley could have been exterminated several times with less effort, less danger and less domestic trouble, while the millions of tons of solid rock were being disintegrated. But Krago was not a quitter. Fisoka could not accuse him of that! He had promised a spectacular scene and he was not the man to disappoint expectations.

CHAPTER XII

The Mediterranean Is Born

AFTER cutting through the highest part of the hills, the channel was widened, thus making a funnel shaped canal with a frontage against the Atlantic of over five miles. The storms were now more furious than ever and extreme caution and skill were required on the part of the pilots to keep the spheres in position. As the storms increased in fury, the waters of the Atlantic became more impatient. The waves sweeping in from the west were of mountain height. For days they battered against the now narrow wall that protected the great valley, as if anxious to enter their new domain and accomplish their work of destruction. The time was now at hand when an occasional wave, higher than the others, would reach the summit and pour over into the nearly finished channel. As the rain and occasional waves of salt water touched the molten bottom of the artificial channel, huge clouds of steam would rise into the air and mingle with the low rain-bearing clouds, making it almost impossible for the workers to see the effect of their rays.

It was due to this fact that several of the disintegrating rays were directed toward the wrong place, so that before the Selenites were ready, the waters of the Atlantic began to pour into the molten channel and go thundering down the valley. The channel became a raging torrent; steam produced by the heated and molten rocks rose from the thundering waters, only to condense and fall as rain, making the storm one of the most severe that had ever appeared on the face of the Earth.

Krago had made good his promise to produce a spectacular scene; so far as Fisoka was concerned, it was becoming too spectacular. She was frightened by the angry waters and, forgetting the recent family argument, she went to her husband for protection. Peace now reigned supreme between Mr. and Mrs. Krago, but the scene below them was far from being peaceful.

There was one thing that had fooled the Selenites. They knew something of hydraulic pressure on their own world, but on the earth, with a superior force of gravity, the hydraulic force was six times as great as that of their own world. The torrent of water, rushing through the small accidental opening, soon tore away more of the wall, thus widening the opening and adding to the strength of the swift torrent. Before they realized it, the forces of nature had removed more rock and soil than their powerful disintegrating rays had done. And the floods were raging though the entire channel, cutting as they went and widening the newly-formed Strait of Gibraltar.

While the valley was filling, the torrent continued to widen the channel until its present dimensions were reached and the strait had become eight miles wide at its narrowest point. Once the waters of the Atlantic had started to pour into the valley, nothing could stop them. The greatest catastrophe in the history of the earth had broken loose. As a monument to this event, one high rock stands to this day as a symbol of strength and endurance. The Pillar of Hercules withstood the flood. Under its modern name, the Rock of Gibraltar, it supports today the British fortress, the key to the Mediterranean.

This vast torrent of water deepened the artificial channel and created a deep submarine valley which now runs up from the Mediterranean deep, right through the Straits, and trenching some distance out onto the Atlantic shelf.

A Deluge

KRAGO and his fleet were no longer interested in the raging torrent of water pouring through a narrow strait. They wanted to see the results of their labors as the basin began to fill, drowning their entrapped victims like rats in a well. The entire fleet began to move toward the east in the wake of the flood.

As the water left the narrow artificial channel, it spread out into a wide flood which swept everything before it. Hills were undermined and washed away; trees were uprooted and the splashing of the swift angry waters produced spectacular scenes that pleased and thrilled the Selenites, in their spheres high above the flood. As the flood reached the lower regions of the valley, the fury of the mad downward rush was increased. Nothing could withstand it as it passed over hundreds of miles of uninhabited country, sweeping hills, rocks and forests before it. As the angry wall of water reached the first of the villages in the valley, the torrent instantly carried it away.

As the Western Levantine Lake was reached, the water spread out over its surface and over the low surrounding valley. The wall of water had spread out over hundreds of miles; it was now no longer of mountain height, but its volume, force and fury were still there. Terror-stricken inhabitants began to seek the safety of the higher hills and mountains, but the threatening waters continued to rise. The storm was still raging in all its fury; the lightning continued to flash and the thunders were roaring louder than the angry torrent of water. The rain pouring from the heavens only added to the terror and misery of the living creatures which were making their last stand against a merciless and unabating flood.

Lions and lambs sought safety side by side. The fear of the waters had caused the sheep and cattle to forget the dangers from the carnivores, which were now influenced more by fear than by hunger. As the face of the only world known to them was being covered by the rising waters, the creatures became more crowded and fought for the higher places which were now covered with every living thing that could walk, fly or crawl. Here a pathetic group of human beings was trying to fight off some of the lower animals which insisted upon sharing the only place of safety. On another high rock was a woman with her children, peacefully taking refuge with a tigress and her new-born kittens. On another sinking hill-top was a group of children, probably placed there by parents who were now drowned and submerged by the ever-rising flood, fighting for the

highest point with dogs that had no doubt been their companions and guardians only a few days earlier. Ancient animosities and friendships were dead, and new hatreds and friendships were born as Death beckoned from the rising waters.

Preservation of the race is almost as strong an instinct as preservation of self, with both the human and lower animals. White men fought against black for the temporary safety of a sinking tree-top. In other places white and black both realized the foolishness of fighting for the privilege of being the last to be drowned. Probably they did not know that the inexhaustible Atlantic was behind the flood, which would continue to rise until their former homes were more than six thousand feet below the level of the great Mediterranean Sea that was now coming into being. No doubt they considered it the work of an angry and avenging deity, who had sent the storm to cover the entire face of their world.

Krago's Troubles

AND like avenging deities in the safety of their spheres, high above the flood, Krago and his warriors looked down upon their handiwork and saw that it was pleasing. They laughed as they recorded in their motion picture cameras the scenes of destruction, suffering and death, which they had caused for the living creatures below. To them it was a battle between science and ignorance; science was winning, and the warriors were satisfied and thrilled by the colossal spectacle.

When Fisoka saw the drowning of thousands of men, women and children, black and white alike, her better nature was aroused. The scenes did not thrill her as they did her militant husband. Instead, she sympathized with the victims of her own brilliant idea. Probably she wished she had never thought of flooding the valley in the first place, but there is no record of her making a statement to that effect. She shifted all the blame and responsibility upon the broad shoulders of Krago. He was responsible—she was innocent! Why did he ever do such a horrible thing?

Krago resented her attitude; he refused to accept the blame. But a few moments earlier he had claimed the credit for the thrilling spectacle. Fisoka knew how to use her tongue to her own advantage and it is recorded that she said a number of unkind things to her husband. His entire war was nothing but unnecessary murder. The peaceful inhabitants of the valley had done nothing to justify their extermination. Was it really too late? Could something not be done to save the helpless victims of the flood. Could the spheres not take them to higher land?

Under ordinary circumstances, Krago would have done anything that his wife asked, but he considered her as much to blame for the disaster as anyone, so her accusations only angered him. He refused to aid a single victim; Fisoka had suggested flooding the valley and he had done it to please her.

At last the waters ceased to rise. The refugees, man and animal alike seemed to sense the fact that the flood no longer menaced them. Despair changed to hope as they patiently waited for the waters to recede so that they might again wander over the peaceful valley that had always been their home But after days of starving and waiting it was seen that the waters were holding their own. Their last stand remained the same, as the refugees watched and waited. Friendships born of fear and despair became frightful animosities as lions devoured lambs and humans fought the lower animals to see which should devour the other. The Selenites, recording every movement in their cameras, knew that the western inland sea was filled and the water was overflowing into the second valley.

The waters of the Atlantic continued to pour in through the enlarged channel, overflowing the first basin and filling the second. The storm continued without any promise of ever ceasing. In the second valley the scenes of destruction just described were repeated and multiplied. Krago and his warriors were satisfied with the success of their labors, while Fisoka and others of her sex were almost frantic. In more recent times, the pictures of the flooding of this valley have caused nightmares by the million among the more peaceful Selenites.

The second basin, which was the center of the remaining Vudu civilization, was much larger than the first and consequently the waters did not rise quite so rapidly. The wall of water, moving across the fertile plains was not very high and much of its force was spent. But encouraged by the everlasting storms, it still caused the unspeakable consternation among the inhabitants. As it reached those prehistoric Levantine cities—more ancient in those days than the Pyramids of Egypt are today—their crumbling foundations were undermined and the helpless blacks found their buildings falling in upon them. Just as in the other valley, the refugees sought safety in the higher hills and mountains, and as the waters continued to rise, the same scenes were re-enacted.

For days and nights the waters continued to rise and the rain continued to descend, now in a steady downpour and again in violent cloudbursts. The briny waters would rush across the valley and batter against the eastern hills, only to return with more fury than ever and meet a new wave from the west. Following the lines of least resistance, the combined wave would return toward the eastern slopes and again attempt to pile up. Like water splashing from one end of a bath-tub to the other, the titanic waves of the newly created sea splashed over Asia Minor and the low plains of Arabia.

A Rainbow!

PEACE now reigned supreme within the fifty spheres that hovered over the raging waters, their human cargo enjoying the colossal spectacle and taking pictures to prove their story when they should return in triumph to their native world. The ladies were reconciled and enjoying the thrilling scenes. Fisoka's mood had changed again and her anger had vanished as suddenly as it had been aroused. Krago whispered to his warriors that he was as capable of conquering women as he was of vanquishing his enemies. But he did not dare let his wife know that she was conquered; she would be more peaceful if she could think she was having her own way.

But the scenes below presented a remarkable contrast to the peaceful scenes inside the spheres. The vast basin was almost full of water and the fury of the swift stream pouring in from the Atlantic through the widened Strait of Gibraltar was as violent as ever. Waves of mountain height swept across the surface of the newborn Mediterranean and piled up in the highlands of Palestine and Asia Minor. Here the flood divided. Half of it flowed down across the fertile plains of Arabia, washing the soil away and sweeping the debris into the Indian Ocean. The remainder of the divided wave returned across the storm-swept Mediterranean, moving in mountain heights toward the west and lap-

ping against the coasts of Southern France and Spain, then passing through the newly formed Strait of Gibraltar, back into the stormy Atlantic. Again the wave would return with more height and momentum than ever, followed by more water from the inexhaustible Atlantic and again pile up over Asia Minor. Another basin was filled by the overflowing flood and the Black Sea was brought into being. The water from the Black Sea returned in the form of another wave to the Mediterranean, only to be forced back into the Black Sea. As mountainous waves splashed back and forth from one sea to the other, the obstructing highlands were cut through and the Sea of Marmora and the Dardanelles were formed.

It was while one of these vast waves was at its height that the sphere carrying Krago and Fisoka high over the flood was trying to determine whether the mountains in the Plateau of Asia Minor would prevent the flood from reaching the Caspian Sea. They were hoping to see the wave cut another channel connecting the Black and Caspian Seas as it was doing in the Dardanelles. In viewing the pictures taken from this sphere, I had no difficulty in identifying two lofty peaks towering above the raging flood. One was Little Ararat, 13,000 feet high and the other was Greater Ararat with an altitude of 17,000 feet above the present sea level. As if in confirmation of the earliest records of our own civilization, the Chaldean and Hebrew histories, a strange craft was washed ashore on the rocky slopes of Greater Ararat. The sun was probably three hours high in the eastern sky and for the first time since the storm had arrived, the heavens promised to clear.

It would no doubt be well for me to pass over this scene. Probably all of my readers have already recognized this strange craft and many have read descriptions of it in both sacred and profane histories. At this point I shall quote from a description given by an ancient Selenite historian, which is still used in certain colleges of the moon:

"A large group of domesticated animals were to be seen emerging from the wrecked craft, probably looking for food. A small pathetic group of human refugees, inspired by their first vision of the sun in days*, had made an altar of rough stones and were offering some sort of a domestic animal as a sacrifice to their deity. We are certain that this deity was not the sun, because the backs of the worshipers were turned toward that brilliant sphere. As if in answer to their supplications, there appeared a marvelous display of colors in the sky, which seemed to extend from the clouds to the earth, just beyond their altar.

"This brilliant display seemed to contain every color known to science, beautifully blended together in the form of an arc of a circle, which extended far into the sky. It was a mystery to the criminals from our peaceful world, as such a vision had never before been seen by our people. For some time afterwards, certain superstitious groups of our people have been inclined to consider it as something supernatural, but more scientific expeditions have learned that it was a common phenomena of Barlenkoz.

"On that giant world, at unknown intervals the moisture in the clouds condenses and falls to the surface of the planet. As the sun shines on the minute drops of water in mid-air, its rays are broken up into their prismatic colors and reflected toward the observer. This was new to Krago and his band of villains, who probably shared the belief of the primitive group of humanity, that this was a promise from their deity that the waters would recede from that part of the world, and the new world, washed forever of black supremacy, would be more desirable than it had been in the past."

*Lunar days of about four terrestrial weeks were meant by the Selenite historian.—W. A. Haverfield.

CHAPTER XIII

The Clash of the Titans

BETWEEN the two basins in the Mediterranean Valley, a range of mountains extended from the north to the south. This mountain range, now known as the Apennines, extending the full length of the Italian Peninsula, once extended down into the lower regions of the valley, almost connecting with the Atlas Mountains in Northern Africa. The huge waves that swept from one end of the newly created sea to the other swept over the highest summits of these lower mountains. The lower part of the Italian Peninsula was the scene of huge torrents sweeping up out of the sea to the summits of the high mountains, and sweeping back again to the angry waters that had flooded the lowlands.

In what is now a part of Sicily, there had long existed a volcano that had probably been a source of wonder and annoyance to the inhabitants. Few of the exploring expeditions from the moon had ever seen this volcano in eruption. It was known to be rather peaceful, though there were times, at infrequent intervals, when molten lava would flow from its top while smoke and steam would rise toward the sky. As the angry waves of this flood rushed up its sides and over its top, the crater was filled with water. The volcano would probably have remained peaceful during Krago's war had it not been for this fact. But the water in the crater found its way into the slumbering fires far below the surface of the earth. Tremendous force was developed by the steam that was produced as the water and the fires mingled. An explosion followed.

The cone of the entire crater was blown away by the force of the explosion, leaving the molten interior exposed to the inexhaustible supply of water from the Atlantic. As the flood rushed into the gaping red wound in the side of Mother Earth, the titanic forces of nature were released and their fury threatened the destruction of the entire world.

Several spheres were in the vicinity at this time. One was destroyed by the first explosion when the entire cone was blown to atoms. From a high altitude, other spheres felt the terrific concussion which threatened to make their craft uncontrollable. They saw the waters close over the newly made hole in the earth, but only one sphere survived when the reaction came. The water refused to stay out of the vast red wound and the fires of the interior refused to be drowned. Two irresistible forces had met in colossal combat!

The earth trembled as the newly produced steam tried to escape. After a long rumbling, the waters were seen to be returning from the gigantic wound. Their fury increased as many cubic miles of water poured out of the earth, rising higher in the air every minute, to be followed by immense volumes of steam. As the steam ceased to emerge, another supply of water rushed in, filling the gaping crater. The occupants of the single remaining sphere decided that they had seen enough spectacular scenes and hurried toward the north, rising to a higher altitude at the same time. But they did not have enough speed to keep from seeing the second eruption. High into the upper regions of the rarified atmosphere,

they saw the angry waters hurled aloft with a force that they believed would take them beyond the earth's gravitational field.

The roar of the wounded and angry earth reached them. They could feel the powerful concussions as explosion followed explosion and even the clouds far below them shared the anger and turbulence of the sea farther below. Other spheres hundreds of miles away, not knowing the cause of the disturbance or the trembling of the earth, rose above the clouds, since the scenes below were becoming too spectacular for safety. Mountains were trembling and shaking; mighty avalanches were produced as countless tons of rock rolled down the mountain-sides. The waters of the sea and the clouds of the air mingled in one vast foamy spray. The bewildered Selenites knew that some titanic force of nature was at work, threatening to split the earth asunder.

High above the clouds, Krago called the remainder of his fleet together. When he learned that the waters had entered the crater of the old volcano, thus causing a deep wound to appear in the earth, he decided that Barlenkoz was a greater menace in her wounded condition than ever. He knew that he had unknowingly released forces far greater than any ever produced by any of his scientific race. He was in the greatest trouble of his troublous life. Fisoka was frantic; her feminine intuition told her that Barlenkoz would fly to pieces, and her intuition never failed. She was positive that her husband would not only exterminate the giant world, but her own little world as well. When Barlenkoz should finally go to pieces, the moon, which now depended upon the gravitational influence of the giant world to hold her in an orbit, would fly off on a line tangent to her orbit into outer space or probably into the sun itself! Why had she ever forsaken her brother and joined forces with his enemies? Why had she ever listened to the cowardly Krago who told her that by exterminating the menacing world, he could gain the throne for her and himself?

Inasmuch as I am not attempting to write a love story, I shall omit ninety-nine per cent of the quarrels and arguments between the commander-in-chief and his capricious and fickle wife. But in this case he was inclined to believe that Fisoka was right. There was no safety on either world; he did not dare return to the moon, neither did he care to remain near the disrupting planet. Consequently the entire fleet retired to a considerable distance outside the atmosphere and continued to watch what they thought was the death throes of the menacing world.

From outer space it was impossible to see the surface of the earth, due to the immense clouds that still hovered over the vicinity of the Mediterranean. Occasionally the clouds would part, presenting a view of a red spot near the center of the sea that he had brought into being. In other regions it was seen that volcanos had come into being that had never been seen during the long period that the menacing planet had been under observation.

After a long time it was noted that the earth was not splitting asunder and for once the infallible Fisoka had been mistaken. Venturing closer to see what was happening, he found that the new sea was now more peaceful. The waves were no longer of mountain height and the rain clouds had dispersed. But in their place he found a different type of cloud, one that none in his party could understand or explain. The terrible wounds in the earth were worse than ever. Water continued to pour into the vast hole, only to return in the form of steam with a violence far greater than that with which it had entered. Steam, smoke, ashes and lava continued to emerge from the terrible wound. The ashes and lava were deposited in the region surrounding the crater, building up a circular rim that would protect the fires of the interior from the waters of the sea. Nature was healing the wound in the side of the planet.

But the smoke, fine ashes and thin volcanic dust were being hurled toward the zenith. A cloud of this material was being formed in the upper atmosphere and spreading for hundreds of miles around the surrounding countryside. Surrounding the giant volcano, the sea seemed to be boiling. Steam was rising from the water and a closer investigation showed that hundreds of smaller craters had broken out on the sea bottom, from which on the one hand immense quantities of steam and lava were pouring, and into which on the other hand more water from the sea was finding its way. This was indeed the battlefield of the Titans!

Reshaping a Continent

About two hundred and twenty-five miles to the north, at a point on the newly formed Italian Peninsula, about midway between the Alps mountains and the shores of the new sea, another volcano, more violent than any of the others, had broken loose. This new crater did not pour molten lava out of the crater in a constant stream like the craters to the south, but sent showers of dry ashes, volcanic dust, flames and smoke to the sky. The heavier material was falling for hundreds of miles over the land and sea, while the smoke and fine dust remained in the upper atmosphere and continued to spread over the entire Mediterranean region.

The entire earth was trembling. Earthquakes were shaking the planet to its core. Even on the opposite side of the earth, mountains were shaking tons of loose rocks from their lofty summits, which rolled down the steep slopes as a mighty avalanche. North of the Mediterranean, the country seemed to be rising! Lakes were drained as their bottoms rose higher than the surrounding countryside. The low mountains were rising to towering heights; the Alps were taking their present form.

The Sahara Sea was leaving its bed! Far in the east it had found an outlet into the Nile and was draining into the Mediterranean. This outlet, at first a small stream, soon became a wide flood that swept over Egypt. The waters from the Sahara continued to come faster, and soon the Nile was inadequate to carry away the flood. The sea now poured over Suez and the once fertile plains of Arabia were again flooded. But the bulk of the waters followed and flooded an ancient, prehistoric river south of Arabia and passed on to the Indian Ocean. The sandy banks of this river were washed away; the river was widened to a width of two hundred miles and the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden were born.

Krago was probably as well informed as any of his race, but there were some of the forces of nature that he was ignorant of. As water from the sea entered the molten regions of the interior of the earth in great quantities, he did not know just what to expect. He probably expected the resulting steam to force the water out through the same crater, and was surprised when deep subterranean explosions rent the crust of the earth, producing countless new volcanoes and millions of earthquakes. He never suspected that the pressure that was being produced would force certain parts of the surface higher into the air and that at the same time other regions would sink far below the level of the sea. He only knew

that tremendous forces were at work, of whose strength and the results that they would produce he never dreamed.

So when the internal pressure became so tremendous that it raised the once fertile plains of Arabia high into the air, hurled the mountains of the Alps to their present heights and lifted the bottom of the vast Sahara Sea to a level above the surrounding regions, he was astounded. And when it was reported that the northwestern portion of the continent was sinking below the sea, his amazement knew no bounds. He had released forces that he had not known to exist!

But so long as the Earth itself did not fly to pieces, Krago could consider his work a success. He had no sympathy for any of the inhabitants; he had come to this planet for no other purpose than to do his utmost toward depopulating it. The geography was changing and he was giving himself credit for the change. Fisoka was again reconciled and was the most popular person in the expedition, because it was due to her own idea that the Mediterranean was flooded in the first place. She would now be content to return home with her victorious husband and demand the throne of the Zerkos. Weak-minded though the Pacifists were, they would still be able to understand that there would never again be any danger of another invasion from the menacing neighbor world, nor another imprisonment with such disastrous results. They could see that Krago and Fisoka had saved their world, and their names would go down in history as of equal importance with the first Zerko, who had saved his race from the terrors of the Destruction, almost a quarter of a thousand centuries earlier.

But Krago and his warriors preferred to remain and witness the spectacular scenes on the wounded planet. The many volcanoes were a source of wonder to them. An earthquake that caused high mountains to tremble and huge cracks to open in the earth presented scenes that they would never again see duplicated. The sinking of Northwestern Europe and the drowning of the primitive inhabitants, the Neanderthal Man, who the Selenites thought never did have a right to live on any world, promised delightful scenes. The draining of the Sahara Sea, as its bottom continued to rise, would be a wonder to them for years to come. The volcanoes, mountains of fire by night and mountains of smoke by day, continued to thrill them. The huge clouds of smoke, ashes and volcanic dust were filling the blue sky and changing its color to a dull gray. And still there were populated regions in India, Australia and China to demand their attention. Until Barlenkoz was depopulated, they would never return.

Again an Ice Age!

The Selenites were fascinated by the great volume of smoke that poured out of the newly formed craters of Aetna, Stromboli and Vesuvius. They enjoyed remaining in the vicinity and watching the lava as it poured out of the crater of Aetna and built the great island of Sicily in the sea that was the result of their labors. They were elated over the spectacular scenes of Vesuvius, which sent many cubic miles of ashes, volcanic dust and cinders into the sky, only to fall again in vast showers over the surrounding countryside. They were thrilled as Stromboli built up a vast cone in the sea to protect the fires of the interior from the inrushing waters.

But Krago was getting impatient; he wanted to get busy and exterminate the mixed races of India and the few survivors of the Martian War in China and Australia. "The mixed races must be wiped out the same as the black," he told his warriors. "We have work to do; the volcanoes will not do it for us."

No one knew it at the time, but Krago was soon to be convinced that the volcanoes would exterminate not only the mixed races, but every living creature as well. They gave promising indications that they would exterminate the Earth more thoroughly than his warriors. The smoke and volcanic dust now clouded the heavens; the vast cloud had mingled with other clouds of dust from distant volcanoes, and covered the entire earth. No longer did a blazing sun reign supreme in a clear blue sky; a dull blue orb tried its best to shine through a dull gray cloud of volcanic dust and warm the surface of the Earth. The numerous volcanoes that had suddenly appeared all over the Earth continued to add to the density of the cloud of minute particles of volcanic dust in the upper atmosphere, too light to fall to the Earth and too heavy to drift off into outer space. The moon and the stars could no longer be seen and the sun having turned to a dull blue, could no longer warm the Earth. The weather had suddenly become very cold; ice and snow now covered the ground and took the place of the warmer rains that had drenched the stricken planet.

The ice caps of the polar regions were creeping toward the equator. North America was half covered with ice. Northern Europe and Asia were at the mercy of the ice, but the southern portions were protected. The skies were growing darker and the rays of the sun weaker; the volcanoes gave no promise of peace and the equatorial regions were chilling, as Fisoka finally persuaded her husband to trust the final extermination to the forces of nature and return home to receive the hero worship of their race and demand the throne of Zerko Haniks.

CHAPTER XIV

The Exile of the Militarists

WHEN Krago's story was given to the public and the pictures of their adventures and exploits were shown, the Pacifists, who now numbered over 95% of the population, refused to give the warriors the glory they had expected. They received the same reception that a party of Americans would receive after destroying millions of lives in any peaceful foreign country. Zerko Haniks and the Supreme Council ordered the immediate arrest of all who took part in the depopulating of Barlenkoz.

But Krago and his warriors refused to be arrested. He demanded the throne on the grounds that Fisoka was the twin sister of Zerko Haniks, and that he himself would make a more capable Zerko than the weakling who now wore the crown. This was the crisis for which Zerko Haniks had long been waiting. He insisted that his original orders be enforced and the raiders be placed under immediate arrest. Krago and his followers resisted and a desperate battle took place, which resulted in a victory for the Militarists, who now threatened to vanquish their enemies on the moon as readily as they had vanquished the Vuduites. A civil war had broken loose.

Since this manuscript is not intended as a history of the moon, the details of this terrible but short war will be omitted. Suffice it to say that Krago and Fisoka were captured early in the war and the power of the rebels was broken. But another year passed before all the malefactors were captured and brought to justice. They were given a short but fair trial before the Supreme Council. There was no question of their guilt, as the entire party not only admitted it, but boasted of it. After a lengthy deliberation, the punishment was prescribed by

(*Concluded on page 566*)

The Tower of EVIL

BY NAT SCHACHNER AND ARTHUR L. ZAGAT

(Illustration by Paul)

Suddenly the streamers swooped down to earth; each ray fastened on one of the slaves and slid up into space dangling a man.

HEIGHT on height the rocky cliffs loomed, a mad jumble of purple and red, and mauve. Here, in the remote interior of Tibet, even the very hills wore fantastic colors.

Up through this devil's playground could be seen a narrow path writhing its way amidst the jumble of tinted boulders. Up and up it wound, until at last it plunged down into a narrow gorge, cleft as by a knife a thousand feet through.

"This is the worst yet!" exclaimed John Dunton, as for the tenth time his struggles started a miniature landslide in the shale. "I don't see how those two bearers of mine manage to wangle their loads over this stuff and keep their footing. Good thing it's near noon and the sun overhead, so that *some* light gets down here or—*well, what now!*"

Suddenly, as though some gigantic hand had thrown an enormous screen across the narrow top of the defile, the dim light illumining the path vanished. A blackness enveloped the traveler and his two native bearers. Then in the defile there rose a moan from an almost imperceptible whisper to a crescendo of terror, until the air vibrated with the wailing of an unspeakable agony. Cold it had been at this mountain height, but now an icy blast roared down the cleft as if a door had been opened to some gigantic refrigerator. Clammy hands plucked at Dunton, tore at his arms, strove to drag him down into the rapids.

When it seemed that human brain could no longer retain its sanity under the impact of the tortured scream, and the icy blast, a sudden silence came. The wind dropped, the plucking hands ceased their efforts to drag the explorer down. The silence deepened, until it seemed to have a power of its own. An uncanny silence! Dunton could not even hear his own breathing, nor that of his bearers. Something seemed to press down on him, an almost physical weight of dread. The darkness was unrelieved.

But then as he stood uncertainly, in front of him there seemed to be a faint, almost insensible, lightening of the blackness. Was it so, or were his eyes deceiving him? Gradually, by the faintest of graduations, the luminescence strengthened, till Dunton could see floating directly in front of him a distinct and glowing cloud of light. A swirling, shapeless cloud of violet light, that cold violet which represents the very limit of the visible spectrum. The cloud swirled and eddied, and whirled about itself, drew itself together, slowly, until, not twenty feet before Dunton, towered a human figure of light!

Two shrieks of terror behind him, a rapidly diminishing rattle of shale, and Dunton knew that his dark-skinned bearers had incontinently departed, they would take back to their village still another tale of horror about this mystic mountain land.

"I don't wonder they ran," he thought, as he surveyed the apparition barring the path. Ten feet tall, the figure stood, in the conical hat, the flowing robes, the skirted "shamtabs" of the Tibetan lamas. The beardless face was sternly set in a forbidding scowl. The right arm, hand extended, was raised in a gesture which clearly conveyed the message, "Go no further!" Motionless the giant figure stood, and the eyes, the entire form in fact, seemed to dominate the defile.

It was not in Dunton's makeup to be afraid. Many a peril he had faced in his adventurous years wandering in the strange places of the earth. But now he trembled from some unnamable revulsion caused by the thing which he saw before him. Then a frenzy of hate seized him. Drawing his automatic, he sprang forward and opened fire. The sharp reports echoed and reechoed from the cliffs, but the point-blank shots seemed to have no effect on that lama of light. Still he stood there with his ominous glance, his warning arm still upraised.

"So that's it!" Dunton grunted. "Well, we'll soon see whether you're real or not." Resuming his headlong rush, Dunton made straight for the figure. Sud-

Arthur L. Zagat — Nat Schachner

ONE of the most mysterious things to the members of the white race is the apparently occult power possessed by the Hindus. Their ability to perform many so called "magical" tricks, some of them astounding, have been a source of wonder to us for years.

No doubt a great deal of their power is pure trickery, but there is also a great deal of profound scientific knowledge at the basis of some. Whether they obtained their knowledge through some now extinct race, or whether it has been slowly accumulated through centuries of penetration of nature's secrets, we do not know.

Our authors, in presenting this story, are attempting to show some of the scientific truth that may lie behind so-called "magic." The Towers of Evil that they write of do really exist in Arabia, as Seabrook in his *Adventures in Arabia* so eloquently describes. Our authors have taken the facts and woven them into a most startling story, of mystery, intrigue and adventure.

denly his fierce attack was checked. Without warning, he had come up against an invisible but rigid barrier. He could see nothing, yet ten feet before he reached the evil image he had come up against a *something* that had resisted his drive. So sudden and unexpected was the check that he was sent crashing backward onto the shale. Bruised and bleeding, he leaped to his feet and again rushed forward. Again he met the invisible barrier. Clubbing his automatic in his right hand, and grasping a long hunting knife in his left, he hammered frantically, and cut, and slashed at the Nothing which stayed him. But he *could not* approach the object of his wrath.

Into the Pit

AT last, exhausted, he paused. Glaring again at the mysterious lama, he saw it move for the first time. The arm was slowly descending, the outstretched fingers slowly closing. Down, down, came the arm until a long forefinger pointed straight at him.

Again Dunton rushed forward to the attack. Again he was thrown back by that invisible Nothingness. But this time, though he fell, he did not reach the ground. He felt himself lifted into the air by the same impalpable being he had been so vainly battling. At the same time all power of volition left his limbs; he could not move!

Like some dead leaf soaring on the bosom of the west wind he was borne aloft, straight up between the towering walls of that narrow defile, up again into the light of day. Higher and higher he rose, in great swooping spirals, until he saw revolving far below him the snow-capped peaks and grassy plateaus of mysterious Tibet. Then off like an arrow he moved toward a distant range of mountains—taller even than their brethren.

Only his vision and his acute brain were alive. The powerful body of this six-foot American was as useless, as immovable, as a felled log.

But barely had he a chance to gather his senses, when he found this impetuous rush slowing far above the range that had been its objective, spiralling downward now. Again the circling swoops set in. Below, he could see, set deep amidst a ring of high and unscalable cliffs, a grassy bowl. It was almost circular in shape, patterned with masses of flowers, cut by winding paths that centered about a white tower. That tower, rising sheer three hundred feet from the gardened plain, was unlike anything his wide journeying had brought to his view. Covering a circular area of a full acre, soaring high in alabaster beauty, it was topped by a huge sphere of burnished metal about one hundred feet in diameter. The glare of the sun's reflection from the tremendous ball blinded Dunton, but in his paralysis he could neither turn his gaze from it, nor relieve his seared eyeballs by dropping their lids.

THE swift spirals brought him closer and closer in diminishing circles to the blazing globe, till at last he hovered some hundred feet above it. Then, like an unfolding tulip, the upper hemisphere slowly opened, to reveal a black pit within. Suddenly the force supporting Dunton relinquished him, and like a plummet he dropped, losing consciousness with the awful rush of his fall. . . .

* * *

Out of the blackness of oblivion the consciousness of the explorer beat its way. His eyes opened,—opened on a scene whose unexpectedness startled his dazed brain to life. Dunton stared about him in amazement. Lying on a pile of cushions of rare and costly silks, he found himself in a room whose splendor surpassed anything he had beheld.

The circular chamber, with sea-blue ceiling a full twenty feet above him, was hung with tapestries worked in lustrous silks, in threads of gold and silver, encrusted with sapphires, diamonds, emeralds, opals and other precious stones. The floor was covered with a deep rug whose pattern was a maze of weird imagery. A low table near him was cut from the purest crystal in a tracery of carving such as only some Oriental Cellini could have produced. What could be seen of the floor and walls was of the purest alabaster. The scene was bathed in a soft sheen of opal light from a hidden source.

A Vision

TENTATIVELY Dunton moved an arm, a leg. His muscular control had returned. Carefully he felt his limbs. No broken bones, no bruises remained to mark that horrible fall. His traveling garments were gone, and in their place he was arrayed in robes of the finest silk.

The American arose, and stared about him. No window, no door, was apparent. Swiftly he strode to the wall nearest him, and skilfully he paced about the chamber, searching under the splendid hangings for some means of exit. An unbroken stretch of glowing alabaster mocked him.

"No chance of getting out of here," he muttered, as he returned to his cushioned resting place. "Major Blakely was right, I sure did get into a mess this trip."

His thoughts turned to the inception of this journey which had culminated thus strangely. The famous Shanghai Club—the grizzled English officer sitting across the table from him. The calm curling of pipe smoke contrasting so vividly with the tales of adventure in the far corners of the earth that the two exchanged as they sipped their pegs.

"I'm going into Tibet next." Dunton had said. "When I was in Arabia last, I heard some wild stories about Towers of Evil, erected in a chain around the world, from which malign influences are supposed to radiate. There is one in Arabia. I never got to it. But Seabrook, in his *Adventures in Arabia* tells of visiting it and being shown around. He didn't see much for he was kept out of a good half of the structure. The chief tower is said to be in the interior of Tibet, and I've made up my mind to have a try at finding it as I know the language. In fact, I'm starting very shortly."

Major Blakely had started, then very impressively had warned him. "My boy, keep out of that forsaken country. I doubt you'd ever come out alive. It's hellish traveling. In the first place, the whole region stands on end. And then—well—queer things happen in there." He paused, blew some rings of smoke, watched them fade, then resumed.

"I was sent in there, fifteen years ago, with a small force, to punish some bandits. I don't like to think of what happened—but I was the only one who got out. And when I got home, my wife was dead—killed in a midnight attack on our little home—and my little three year old daughter—was gone. I have never found out what became of her and I don't speculate too often. Afraid to. Don't go! It's the Devil's own land."

"Well, I'll think it over," Dunton had replied. But his mind was set, and the Major's warning merely confirmed his determination to penetrate the mysteries of the Forbidden Land.

The American reviewed the months of toiling progress that followed. The difficulties he had overcome to

assemble a sufficient number of bearers for his expedition. The ominous prophecies he had received as the caravan had proceeded from village to village. Dunton had laughed at the tales of horrors which lay before him, but his men had not laughed. One by one they had deserted, until only two stalwarts had been left to enter that narrow gorge with him and witness its terrors.

"Looks like there was something to those stories, all right. Of course, it isn't magic, but somebody here has control of forces that white scientists never even dreamed of. Well," he thought, "I suppose I'll be lots wiser before I'm much older. I've been in plenty of tight places before and I've always found a way out. But what a story I'll have to tell when next I see the boys at the Explorers' Club in New York. Meanwhile this isn't such a bad place—but I wonder if the idea is to starve me to death."

A soft rustle behind him, and he turned like a flash—"Well, where did you come from?"

There, set like a more gorgeous jewel in this glittering room of splendor was a girl—a white girl—a beautiful white girl. Rippling waves of golden fire, her long hair fell about her, framing a face whose loveliness sent a thrill of pain to his heart. Eyes, deeply blue, like the Mediterranean at midsummer. Small straight nose, whose nostrils, shell pink, quivered with her soft breathing. Red lips, with perfect lines, their luscious beauty parted to show the gleaming whiteness of her teeth. She was garmented in a single silken robe of cerulean blue, which dropped straight down from her shoulders, caught at the waist by its only ornament, a thick golden rope whose tasseled ends swung against a thin white ankle.

In her hands she held a crystal tray, on which were crystal dishes heaped with food, and a tall glass whose amber contents glowed in the opal light.

Dunton leaped to his feet with a torrent of questions. "Who are you? What is this place? How did you get in?—." But the lovely maiden did not speak. She straightened, looked at him a moment—put an incomparably beautiful finger to those red lips—then as the explorer started toward her—slipped behind a hanging close beside her. In a moment Dunton had ripped the tapestry down—nothing but the cold white alabaster wall. Frantically he beat at it, pushed, pressed here and there on the smooth surface, sought for a nail hold. He could find not the slightest seam in the gleaming surface, no secret button, no yielding panel. He was imprisoned as securely as before.

Finally Dunton turned to the food the maiden had brought him. "That's the queerest of all—he mused as he ate. "I could swear that this is the Tower of Evil, but there's no evil about that girl, that I'll stake my life on. God, but she's beautiful. I've never seen any one who could hold a candle to her! And yet, and yet, there was something familiar about that face. It haunts me. Somewhere, some how I've run across some one who resembles her." He pondered for a long time. "No, can't place it. But I've never seen her before. No one could forget that beauty."

His hunger satisfied at last, he lay back among his cushions. "What next, I wonder?"

CHAPTER II

Through the Wall!

IT was sometime later as he sat musing that Dunton suddenly lifted his head, and sniffed the air. A faint subtle incense pervaded the room. What was it? Where had that peculiar, though not unpleasant fragrance greeted his nostrils before? The answer eluded him. Meanwhile the odor grew more and more definite—a heavy, sweet, cloying perfume. Thin wisps of vapor curled and floated round the room.

Suddenly a picture formed and grew clear in his mind. China . . . Pekin . . . an obscure temple on the outskirts of the city . . . himself in mandarin costume, disguised; no foreign devil entered here on penalty of death . . . the underground chamber—the priests of the temple lying about on low couches in various stages of exaltation—the same peculiar essence. That was it! Hasheesh!*

Even as he recognized it, the wisps of fog clouded and billowed; the room and its contents blurred. The explorer felt his mental perceptions growing hazy. Tho he fought against the feeling, his mind swayed and swooned; the powerful drug was numbing his senses—he was slipping. . . . Then the fumes suddenly lifted and cleared!

The explorer shook himself, striving to clear his fuddled brain. What was coming next? Too long had he been in the East not to know that this was but the prelude for something sinister. He must be prepared for anything now.

It came! A panel noiselessly slid open in the smooth alabaster surface of the wall, revealing an opening about a foot square. Dunton backed away to the opposite wall, keeping a watchful eye.

A dark mass blocked the space, then floated through into the room. It poised momentarily, suspended in mid air. Dunton crouched in readiness, determined to sell his life dearly. He gazed intently at the floating body. It slowly took shape and form. Brave though he was, he fell back in horror. An involuntary cry burst from his tortured throat!

Great Heavens! It was impossible! A tiny human being, eight inches in height, perfect in every lineament, floated and spun on the impalpable air. Even as he stared wild-eyed, the creature grew and visibly increased in size. Upward it floated, expanding all the while, until the head almost touched the ceiling. By this time the body had attained normal human dimensions. It hovered, then slowly descended until the feet were planted firmly on the floor, revealing to Dunton's bewildered eyes an old, old man. His wizened face was the color and texture of brown parchment, seamed with innumerable wrinkles almost out of all semblance to human features. A curving beaklike nose, and bony claw-like fingers gave the appearance of a bird of prey, hovering over its victim. Black beady eyes of astonishing lustre and vitality protruded from that incredibly ancient countenance. Surmounting all was a conical yellow hat.

He was clad in a flowing yellow robe, the costume of a Tibetan lama, but it was unusual in the richness of its ornaments and the profusion of strange characters that covered it. Afterwards the explorer discovered that these marks were mystic writings in Tibetan and ancient Persian. At the moment, however, he was too astounded to take note of the details.

The ancient lama gazed at him with an air of authority. "Who are you that dare set foot in the sacred limits of our territory, where no foreigner or Tibetan has ever penetrated; and what was your purpose in coming here?"

The explorer collected his scattered wits. For a moment he hesitated, then determined that frankness was the better plan.

*An intoxicating Indian drug either drunk or inhaled like opium.

Dunton Is Unafraid

"MY name is John Dunton, and I am an American. I am an explorer by inclination, and have ventured in strange lands over the far stretches of the earth, setting foot in many places that no white man's foot but mine had trod before. Three months ago in China, I heard the legend of a strange sect that inhabited a secluded valley in the highest reaches of the Ammyi Machen Range, and of their still stranger practices. I determined to discover for myself the truth of this legend.

"For months I traversed the peaks and plateaus of China and Tibet, until finally I came to a wild gorge. The rest, no doubt you know."

"Yes, I do," the semblance of a smile found lodging in the withered features. "What was done, was done at my command."

Then the lama grew stern again.

"Know you that by attempting to penetrate our holy domain, your life has become forfeit? No living being may enter here except on my orders and for my purposes. No Tibetan in his right mind would come within twenty miles of the prohibited territory. Yet you have rashly dared, and must pay the penalty."

The American hid his emotions behind an impassive air. Not for worlds would he display even the semblance of fear before this cruel, cold-blooded, priest. Quickly his eye flashed around the room. If only there were an exit anywhere—a single bound would strangle the ancient creature before him; and then—perhaps—escape.

But the walls were impenetrably smooth; even the little panel had slid back into position, leaving no trace.

The lama smiled again. He seemed to have read the explorer's thoughts.

"Banish any idea of escape. I have ways of preventing that. Even should you gain the outer valley, you could not progress an inch unless I will it. You have seen enough to convince you I am possessed of more than mortal powers. By but a thought, I could blast you into eternal nothingness."

"Rot!" was the contemptuous retort. "I grant you have performed some weird tricks upon me. Some of them I can explain very easily. For instance that figure of light in the gorge. That could easily have been done with a magic lantern projector on a cloud mass. Your spectacular entrance into my prison, I attribute to a hypnotic illusion due to hasheesh fumes. Only that invisible wall of air in the gorge, and my levitation through space, I cannot explain. Possibly you have discovered the principle of gravity nullification. Or perhaps that too was a hypnotic illusion.

"Once, in Africa, I overawed a savage tribe so that they bowed down before me like a God. Before their startled eyes I turned water into blood with a little phenolpthalein and soap—and back again into water with a dash of vinegar. I caused the trees to speak—my radio speaker was hidden in the leaves. And as a final touch—luck aided me with an opportune eclipse—I darkened the sun.

"Your scientific wonders, or illusions, do not dismay me. I respect your achievements, but I do not fear them."

The Lama looked at him again with keen, beady eyes; then appeared to lose himself in reflection.

The American waited tensely; his racing mind seeking some mode of extricating himself.

Abruptly the old priest raised his head.

"But you fear death?" he challenged.

An inner shudder traveled through Dunton. Brave and fearless to a fault, he could not view the prospect of immediate extinction without a qualm. But outwardly he remained calm. His captor must not be permitted to sneer over his tremblings or pleas for mercy.

"When it comes, I shall meet it as a brave man should," he said simply.

An unwilling gleam of admiration crept into the lama's eyes. "This is the man for my purposes," he muttered to himself.

Then he spoke. "Hearken carefully to what I say. Should you prove the man of sense and intelligence I take you to be, you shall not only avoid the frightful tortures already prepared for you, but you shall become possessed of power undreamt-of by mortal man. For almost a century have I toiled and perfected my plans; and now the day of accomplishment is near. To-morrow at the moment the sun rises over the mountain tops, the earth shall lie prostrate at my feet, and I shall rule over the nations; and the name of Lord Shaitan"—here he touched his forehead devoutly with one finger—"shall once more be worshiped by the people of the earth as in ancient wise. We shall destroy mercilessly the altars of your upstart God who too long has triumphed."

The Priest Explains

THE explorer gazed at him in growing astonishment. Why, the man must be mad!

"But I am old—very old," continued Shaitan's priest, "and soon the day will come when I must depart to the bosom of great Shaitan. Who then shall continue the great work? For years have I searched for a worthy successor. All in vain. These stupid lamas, my underlings, are fit only to take orders and obey them blindly, not to conceive and plan. Not one of them knows all my purpose. Only one—a girl—has the brains I require, but then—she is only a girl."

Here he turned, and pointed a clawlike finger at the astounded explorer.

"You—you are the very man; brave, intelligent, resourceful, and possessed of a knowledge of science. Cast your lot with me—become my second in command—adopt the worship of the true Lord, Shaitan, and you shall reign with me, and alone, after me. No despot of old ever had the sway that shall be mine—and yours! What say you?"

This astonishing speech had convinced Dunton that he was dealing with a fanatic. He must be careful in his replies, so as not to arouse his fury. Besides, a glimmer of hope awoke in his breast.

"What you say interests me immensely, and it is also very flattering. But you have told me very little—just what is your scheme for conquering the earth, and who is Shaitan, whom you worship? Before I come to a decision, I must know more."

The old lama nodded his head approvingly. "Quite right, and spoken like a wise man. I shall start from the very beginning, so that you may understand all. I am not afraid to reveal my plans to you. Either you join me or"—he paused significantly, "or you go where your knowledge will be of no value to you."

He paused, then continued. "Know then, that almost a thousand years ago, in the land of Persia, when the religion of the false Mohammed ruled the earth, my ancestor, Hassan ibn Sabbah, founded the society of Hashishin, or Assassins. He pretended to follow Mohammed but in realty he formed his society to worship the only true Lord, Shaitan—known to you as Satan.

"Uncounted ages before, Shaitan ruled the world, and

Evil—the precious principle of Evil—flourished triumphant. Then the traitorous God—incarnation of the womanish Good—by low stratagems overthrew the rightful Lord. Since then Shaitan has languished in darkness; only our company kept his worship alive through the ages. But to-morrow the minds of the people shall turn to the Evil once again, and Shaitan shall once more come into his own.

"My ancestor, Hassan," he continued, "was the Supreme Chieftain. He was the Sheik-al-Jabal—known to you Westerners as the 'Old Man of the Mountains.' By means of hasheesh, he enrolled a band of young men—the Fedais—from whom the blindest obedience was exacted. On them the religion of Islam was enforced, to the scorn of our initiate. By secret assassination, by cord and steel, those blind tools spread the power of Shaitan unwittingly.

"For several hundred years, the Society grew and flourished, until the fatal day when Hulagu, the Tatar, accursed be his name, smote down our brethren by the thousands, and destroyed their mountain citadel, Alamut."

Dunton listened in absorption. He had heard of that strange ancient sect of the Assassins.

"Fortunately, a few of the Initiate, headed by Hassan, the youthful son of Rukneddin, the then Sheik, managed to cut their way through the ring of their enemies. For years the devoted band wandered over the face of the earth—outcasts—their hands against the world, and the world's against them. Faithfully they kept alive the holy spark of Shaitan, in a world given over to false Gods.

"After many years of traveling in strange lands, the Hashishin came to the roof of the world—this high mountain region of Tibet, so like their former fastness in the mountains of Persia. Here they decided to halt, and found anew the society.

"In this very valley they settled. Conforming to ancient practice, outwardly they adopted the prevalent faith of Buddhism and Lamaism, while secretly practicing the holy rites of Shaitan. Through magical means, a ring of prohibition was placed about this valley, that no one has ever penetrated."

He smiled an evil smile. "They worked in secret, and utilized the prevalent beliefs for their own ends. About the year 1400, our then Sheik-al-Jabal, seized the power in Tibet for a sect he organized under the name of Geluba. To this day, Lamaism is insidiously impregnated with our doctrines, and so unknowingly the Tibetans do honor to Lord Shaitan."

CHAPTER III

New Wonders

BY this time the explorer was listening with growing fascination. Was this mad old priest telling the truth or not? Was there in reality this Devil's Cult, and was it about to spread its pernicious tentacles over the world?

Triumphantly the old priest continued his marvelous tale.

"From the very beginning, the Hashishin had determined to bring the world once more to the altars of Shaitan, and to that they bent all their energies. Magic in all its aspects was studied by the Initiate, until now we are adepts at the Black Art. The marvels of the Hindu Fakirs are but child's play to what we can do. My entrance to this cell was but an elementary example of our art.

"Early in my youth, I devoted myself to a close study of the processes of Nature, for through the subjugation of natural forces, rather than through magical processes, did I foresee our chance to bring the world to the worship and gospel of Evil.

"Years of study and experimenting, and the secrets of Nature unrolled before me. I discovered, among other things, how to control and direct the minds of men, to the uttermost ends of the earth." He interrupted himself. "But you shall see for yourself."

With that he clapped his hands. A door slid open silently in a hitherto unbroken wall. Immediately two guards stepped into the cell, and salaamed deeply before the old lama. Powerful brutes they were, features decidedly Mongoloid, with close cropped bullet heads, wicked looking scimitars dangling from the girdles of their maroon colored robes.

A few staccato commands in Tibetan and the guards salaamed again, then placed themselves on either side of the American. "Follow me," beckoned the priest, and glided through the door. Dunton was pushed after him into a long narrow passageway, through which a soft yellowish glow was diffused, though he could discern no source of the illumination. But what was more surprising—the passage was not level—on the contrary, it slanted upwards steeply at a grade of over forty-five degrees for about fifty feet; then spiralled sharply out of sight.

Dunton stared in wonderment. Only with the greatest exertion could they climb that steep slope. "Are we to go that way?" he asked.

"Yes" answered the High Priest, smiling at his captive's puzzled look. "Just another of my inventions. Watch!"

With that, he pressed a button inconspicuously imbedded in the wall. A faint moaning sound filled the corridor, like the noise of wind in trees. It grew in intensity to a high pitched whine; and suddenly, the American felt himself lifted off his feet. An invisible force was propelling him up through the winding passageway. In front of him soared the lama, and on either side floated a guard. Around and around they spiralled almost interminably. At about two hundred feet up, the whine ceased abruptly, and they were deposited once more on the solid floor. "This must be the top of the tower," thought Dunton.

Above them a door opened noiselessly and a white brilliance flooding the hall caused him to blink for a moment. Then the group rose, again lifted by the mysterious force into a vast circular domed chamber.

The vault of the dome, he saw was fifty feet in height. On its concave surface was painted the huge form of Shaitan—dark, forbidding, goat horned and goat bearded; cloven hoofs protruded from a richly emblazoned robe, and a huge forked tail wound its way over the face of the dome. He was seated on a golden throne; in one hand he grasped firmly a writhing three-headed serpent, each head bearing a golden crown; from the other hand, with outstretched palm downward, jagged lightnings darted and gleamed.

Below his cloven feet were depicted a multitude of figures, human in form and semblance, yet with a *hideous* aura of evil about them. The indescribable horror of what he saw depicted there, utterly unnerved Dunton. "Good God, can such monstrous things be?" he shuddered, not daring to look again.

The Girl Again

WHEN he had somewhat regained his composure, he looked about him. At one side was a huge instrument board, covered with switches, metallic but-

tons, and tiny lights, flashing intermittently—red, yellow, blue and orange. Next to it was a huge white screen, of the type used in motion picture projection. In front of it, a platform that moved and swayed, was imbedded in the floor. At the far end of the dome, a lacquered partition cut off from observation a sizable area. From within could be heard a confused hum, faint crackles; and the peculiar odor of ozone pervaded the air.

The place was a hive of activity. Men, garmented in the red robes of Tibetan lamas, were streaming in and out of the door leading through the lacquer wall; low voiced orders were given in a tongue unknown to the explorer. Though their dress was Tibetan, these men had not the characteristic Mongol features of the native Tibetans or of his escorting guards. Their faces resembled in aquilinity and high breeding those of the old High Priest. Dunton puzzled over it for a moment. Then the solution came to him. These were Persians, far from their native mountains—relics of an ancient race.

"See you this tower," gloated the lama to Dunton, "it is from here that the world and the nations thereof will be conquered!"

Dunton stared at him skeptically. He had seen enough to convince him of the power of these Hashishin, but this was too fantastic, too unbelievable.

"But how?" he queried, "so far you have not shown me anything. All I see here is just what I could find in any well appointed electrical laboratory. When you boast of subduing the world from this place, that is asking me to believe too much. You will have to explain considerably."

The old man laughed harshly.

"You doubt my power? It would be well for you to believe and bow your head. Hearken—!"

The deep tones of a gong interrupted him. As the brazen reverberations died away, the lamas ceased their labors. The priest nodded his head.

"Ah, yes—it is the time for the grand ceremonial." He turned to Dunton. "To-night we celebrate the Nativity of our Lord Shaitan. You shall witness it. Then you will believe in His omnipotence, and in our powers as the servants of His Most Evil Spirit."

"Take him back to his chamber," he commanded the guards, "and when the ritual commences, bring him into the Garden of Paradise to view the holy rites; but see you guard him closely. If he escapes, your lives shall pay for it. Go!"

Once more the guards ranged themselves on either side of Dunton, and moved him to the door of the spiral passageway. One pressed a button, and the three were lifted from the floor, floating swiftly down the twisting corridor back to the oriental chamber. There the explorer was unceremoniously deposited, the walls closed, and he was alone again.

The astounding events of the past hours, together with the even more astounding tale of the Priest of the Devil, whirled through his exhausted mind in a nightmare. And that maiden—was she real too, or some hypnotic vision? He lay back on his cushions to try to straighten out his maze of thoughts—but somehow his mind returned continually to the girl.

Minutes later, a sound roused him, a panel slid open, and there appeared again the girl of his thoughts. There was no doubt about it—she was real, living flesh and blood, bearing food on the crystal tray. Dunton forgot the lama and his strange story—his eyes feasted on her beautiful form. She was even more lovely than at her first appearance.

She felt his gaze upon her, and a rosy flush came to her cheeks. Timidly she looked at him. Was there pity in that glance, was that a tear starting from the blue of her eye? He started forward. Hastily she set down the tray and like a startled fawn, fled from the room. The tapestry swung back into position, and the too ardent explorer was brought up against the blank wall.

Into the Garden

ABSENTLY he ate the strange foods on the tray. The warm emotions he was experiencing left no room for any other sensations. Who was this white maiden, so English in appearance; what was she doing in this hellish place? How explain the mystery of her presence? And again there occurred to him the vague familiarity of her adorable countenance—somewhere he had seen features resembling hers—a crude likeness, as it were.

But the explorer was soon aroused from his romantic thoughts. Again the two guards stood before him. In his absorption he had not seen or heard their entry. Obediently, he followed them through an aperture that had not been disclosed before. For some time they stumbled through a long, low, dark tunnel, dripping with moisture.

A breath of warm, perfumed air caressed Dunton's cheek, and the next moment he was out in the open. Involuntarily, a cry of delight broke from him. The Garden of Paradise! A veritable Eden! Never in all his adventurous career had he seen anything to compare with the luxuriousness, the indescribable glories of this spot. No wonder the original Fedai—band of sworn assassins—met death gladly, if this was their foretaste of the Paradise to come!

Before him stretched a vast garden, bathed in a golden glow, its source unseen. It was night, and the velvet black sky was studded with brilliants. Patterned clusters of rare and exotic blooms grew in profusion, yielding soft perfumes. And closely intermingled, was the familiarly drowsy incense of hasheesh. Strange, soft music tinkled and strummed from invisible musicians—Oriental and sensuous—conjuring visions of harem beauties.

Finely carved tables were scattered around, bearing heaped fruits—dishes of luscious dates, ripe red pomegranates, golden oranges, and bursting tender figs, flanked by crystal goblets filled with amber liquor. Long low divans were near each table, gorgeously damasked, and strewn with silken scarves and cushions.

On the divans lolled a multitude of men, clad in immaculate white robes. Dunton walked down a flower lined path toward the reclining figures, closely followed by the maroon guards. As he approached the banqueters, they turned lustreless, disinterested eyes on him; then returned lazily to their feasting.

The first glimpse, however, was sufficient to bring Dunton up short with an exclamation of amazement. Of all the surprising sights he had witnessed in this crowded day and night, this was the strangest. These men were not Tibetans, they were not Orientals—they were Caucasians! Here reposed a tall, ruddy faced Englishman; next him sat a bearded Frenchman; on the other side sprawled an olive skinned Italian. All about was a polyglot assemblage—all the races of the earth were represented in this Tibetan garden—Russians, Germans, big boned Swedes, slant-eyed China-

men, grave Arabs, swarthy Malays, giant Nubians, and even—several unmistakable Americans!

What lent an air of utter unreality to the scene, was the dullness of their eyes, the pallor of their faces, the set looks of automatons. Though they were feasting, there was no sound of revelry or merriment; they ate in silence with stiff mechanical movements; no one spoke to his neighbor, or seemed aware of his presence. There was something sinister about these men. Dunton shivered as though a cold blast had struck his heart. A pall of evil—some mighty enchantment—seemed laid on this company, and for a moment the adventurer was afraid—horribly afraid!

He had no time to investigate further. His warders prodded him, motioning for him to proceed. Down scented paths they moved. A figure darted across an intersecting path. His heart gave a quick leap as he recognized the girl of his dreams. She favored him with a side glance that thrilled him and then disappeared down a shaded lane.

Dunton found himself now on a level grassy area, about a hundred yards across. On one side squatted a row of red clad lamas, on the other an orange hued row, and facing him from the farther end was stiffly drawn up a platoon of maroon guards, scimitars flashing in their hands. From behind Dunton, came slowly, desultorily, the band of banqueters, who ranged themselves irregularily to complete the fourth side of the open square. Dunton was pushed into a front row, where he was compelled to seat himself, guarded as before.

CHAPTER IV

The Dance of Evil

FOR a while there was silence—even the strains of distant music ceased. A hush of anticipation settled on the assembled throng—even the ranks of the polyglots rustled with faintly aroused interest.

The thick, silence was shattered by an ear-splitting blast, then a wailing rushing sound of strange tonalities, unlike anything Dunton had ever heard before. Then through an opening in the farther end of the square, marched slowly and solemnly a weird procession. Ten demons garbed in short blood-red gowns, distorted masks covering their faces, representing monkeys, jackals, vultures and pigs; wooden helmets surmounted by red flags on their heads; wristlets, anklets and necklaces of tiny human bones. In one hand each carried a trumpet made of a hollow human thigh bone, on which they blew concerted blasts. In the other, each brandished the *purbu*, a dagger like weapon. From each girdle hung an apron of tanned human skin.

Dunton's flesh prickled with horror, but he could not remove his eyes from the diabolic scene. He watched with a sickening fascination.

The demons marched into the center of the square, where they halted in line, blowing a final blast on their frightful trumpets.

There followed them a group of graveyard ghouls, dressed as skeletons; eight monkey masks, clad in red and armed with bows, accompanied by eight devil's wives. They carried tiny drums, made of human skulls, over which were spread human skins. The drum sticks were small snakes, immobile when used to strike the drums, at other times they arched and wriggled rhythmically in the air.

The groups ranged themselves in serried rows on the fields, and commenced a high pitched blood-curdling chant to the accompaniment of the trumpets and drums.

The chant rose to a wail as six masked demons stepped slowly into the field bearing on their shoulders a silken shield. Seated crosslegged thereon was the figure of a girl, robed in purest white, hands outstretched, head thrown back.

Dunton jumped to his feet in incredulous horror. The girl again! Here among these fiends! With a shout he sprang forward. Flaming anger blurred his vision. He had only one idea—to scatter those loathsome demons and rescue her. After that, he neither knew nor cared what would happen.

But the burly guards threw themselves upon him, and bore him to the ground. He struggled in their iron grips, until finally the point of a scimitar prodded into his side brought him to his senses. It was the veriest madness, he realized. He must wait until a more favorable occasion arose. Quietly he sat between his scowling captors, arms pinioned, inwardly raging.

The girl-goddess was seemingly unaware of the commotion she had aroused. As she was borne around the grassy plain her face was set and rigid, her eyes gazed straight ahead with a fixed hypnotic stare.

The chant increased in volume. Eight bird-masked demons bore aloft a low throne of gold, on which was seated the High Priest of Shaitan. He was clad in a richly embroidered robe, inset with precious stones. In one hand he carried a trident, on the prongs of which were impaled three human heads, and in the other a purbu, ruby encrusted.

A Maddening Scene

THE chant ceased. A pause. Then the very heavens were split with a hideous clamor. In came ten devils, horned, hoofed, tailed, and ringleted with human bones, bearing aloft a high throne, dazzling with the sparkle of innumerable gems. Seated thereon was a huge figure—Shaitan himself—the incarnation of pure Evil. A necklace dangled to its breast—of freshly torn, bleeding human hearts! A huge cobra writhed and twisted in its clammy grip. Against his better judgment, against his very reason, Dunton *knew* the malign thing to be alive.

Shaitan was placed in the center of the field. On the right hand his High Priest was set at a respectful distance; on his left the girl-goddess.

Dunton clenched his hands until the finger nails pierced his palms, but made no outward sign. God in heaven! What could he do? He coldly determined, that at the first sign of any harm to the girl, he would seize a scimitar from an unsuspecting guard, and fling himself upon those devils, slaying until the end. He had no illusions about that end, but strangely, he felt no qualms; a fierce elation buoyed him. The lust of battle sang in his veins.

A red lama arose, and encircled the figure of Shaitan, strewing a powder on the ground as he did so. Immediately a ring of flame sprang up. Then he walked in a great circle enclosing all three, strewing powder and muttering an unintelligible incantation. Another flaming circle, concentric with the lesser one, leapt into being. "This is a scene oft of Hell," thought Dunton.

Then commenced a slow rolling of the drums. The animal masks came forward, threw themselves upon the ground grovelling before the Satanic image, and then arose. They commenced a slow weaving dance, in which group by group, the whole host of demons joined, until they completely surrounded the fiery circle. A weird unearthly chant rose and fell; the trumpets sounded. Slowly at first, then faster and faster danced the de-

monic crew. Louder and louder shrieked the trumpets, more and more rapidly beat the drums, higher and higher rose the chant, until finally, the circle of dancers ran and spun and whirled with inconceivable rapidity, and the frightful noise reached an unbearable pitch. The sweetish odor of hasheesh impregnated the air. Dunton felt his senses swooning—the leaping figures blurred before him.

He shook his head to clear his brain, and looked again. What was this? The circling demons were rising from the ground, spinning and weaving. Higher and higher into the air they rose,—robes, masks, ornaments in one vast whirlpool of spinning color. From the whirling mass dropped the graveyard ghouls, trailing spectral light. As they touched the earth, the ground yawned, and they sank out of sight. A moment later, they popped up into the air to join the spinning crew. With lightning rapidity they rose and fell, rose and fell, so that the air was full of shooting figures, and the airy crew whirled and spun, dancing on nothing. Dunton felt his mind giving way—the whole phantasmagoria became a huge kaleidoscope of demoniac figures and dazzling colors. Huger and huger it grew—until it exploded in a shower of sparks like a great Roman candle!

CHAPTER V

The Great Threat!

WHEN Dunton came to, a deathly quiet prevailed. The masked demons were gone, vanished without a trace; only the flaming rings and the three throned figures they enclosed reminded the explorer that the whole had not been a nightmare.

The High Priest was speaking. Slowly he salaamed to the bestial figure of Shaitan, then straightened.

"Hashishin, initiates, brethren of our holy faith! All is in readiness. Tomorrow, as the sun gilds the top of yonder mountain, the earth and its inhabitants shall bow in worship of Most High Shaitan, Lord of the Nether Lands, and of all that creep, or swim, or fly. Once more shall his ancient majesty be renewed, and that God who wrested dominion from him, shall retreat in terror to the outer bounds of space! For fifty years I toiled in secret, and now, through the grace of Shaitan, the means have been perfected. See our great Tower,"—and he pointed.

Dunton turned around, and saw, a half mile to the rear, the huge alabaster Tower rearing its white height above the fragrant gardens. It swam in the golden glow, surmounted by the huge metallic ball. Innumerable little flashes of white light played over its surface.

"From yonder Tower," the Priest of Evil exulted, "and from its brother Towers, at dawn shall flash the emanations that shall bend the proud and stiff necked people to our will—slaves to do our bidding and the bidding of our Lord!"

Was it a fantasy, or did the American actually see the gleam of satisfaction in Shaitan's terrible eyes, and the slight nodding of the head?

"And I—," here the old man cast a haughty glance at the assemblage, "and I shall be the Vicar of our Lord on earth, not to be disobeyed on penalty of immediate extinction."

"And you—my brethren," he turned to the red lamas, "shall once more resume the Ministry of Evil, and tend the altars and the sacrificial offerings. The burnt flesh shall be as incense to your senses."

"Ho! slaves!" he shouted in a terrible voice, and shook his trident.

The alien company surrounding Dunton, stirred and rose. With the drugged movements of somnambulists they moved forward, eyes fixed and staring.

"Heavens, how uncanny they are!" thought the explorer, with mingled feelings of pity and repulsion, "they look as though their souls have been removed, and only the tenantless bodies remained."

The old man gazed on them with hideous glee.

"These wretched things were brought here from the four corners of the globe to do our will. Already have they been subjected to the secret emanations. Tonight they shall be transported back to their native lands, and to-morrow when our spells are cast like nets over the earth, they shall raise their voices like roaring bulls, and lead the stricken hordes to the altars of Shaitan, now set up in secret places. When their task is done, they shall furnish the first bloody sacrifice to appease the nostrils of our Lord."

Again it seemed to Dunton's fascinated vision that the idol leered at him. His brain reeled with the horror of it all, but he was worse than helpless. "God," he prayed inwardly, "grant me the means to rid the earth of this nightmare crew."

The Priest rose from his throne, and pointed the trident at the glowing ball atop the Tower. Throwing back his head, he intoned an incantation. The flickering lights grew in intensity. Then the ball began to rotate, throwing out innumerable streamers of light. Like huge searchlights they swept the heavens. Suddenly they swooped down to earth, and to Dunton's amazement, each ray fastened on one of the slaves, and slid up into space again, with the man dangling at its tip. The rays whirled to the four points of the compass; the unfortunate men were shot along the beams in all directions. Faster—faster they moved; huge birds that grew ever smaller with the speed of their flight. Then they passed over the surrounding mountain walls, and vanished.

For the first time in his life, the brave adventurer felt blind panic sweep through him. With a mighty effort, he crushed down the hysteria within him, and turned to the three figures.

Even as he turned, he caught a glimpse of the girl he loved fading out into thin mist, leaving a blank shield to his startled view. An exclamation rose to his lips, and he started to his feet. But the vigilant guards pinioned him before the movement was completed.

The Priest Confesses

A RAY of light darted down to the throne of the High Priest. The ancient one seated himself on the broad beam, and promptly floated up the shining path, up to the Tower dome, that opened to receive its Master.

The throne of Shaitan rose slowly and perpendicularly into the air. A green radiance enveloped the ghastly figure. Upward it flew, until it seemed a tiny ball of green fire, and then it mingled indistinguishably with the stars.

The red lamas arose, and vanished into the maze of paths. Dunton was alone with his escort. For a moment, the wild hope of a sudden dash for liberty rose in his bosom, but the point of a scimitar pricking his side convinced him the time was not yet.

"What do you want now?" he spoke angrily.

The impassive Oriental gestured for him to move ahead, significantly twirling his weapon. Back to the Tower they went. The smooth white wall opened at their approach, and they stepped into what seemed the bottom of a deep well. From the orifice, high overhead,

came a faint gleam. Even as they strode to the center, they were lifted straight up. Up they floated, and out of the opening into a small room. Through a door, the Mongols pushed the American, and once more he found himself in the interior of the dome.

There sat Sheik-al-Jabal, attired in the yellow lama's robe in which Dunton had first encountered him—as though the whole devil's scene in the garden had been a dream. This time the lama was alone!

Again Dunton looked about the vast hall, lighted now with a green glow that lent to all its apparatus a spectral appearance. The buzz of activity was absent, only the lama was there in the wide circle of this domed chamber. The old Assassin was seated directly before the white screen on an ebony throne, over whose surface writhed all the evil forms he had but now beheld.

The American made a quick movement forward as if to attack the weazened Disciple of Evil. But the lama raised his hand. "Stop! You should know my power by now. Stand there, before me on that platform."

Dunton reluctantly obeyed. As he stepped on the platform its swaying ceased, but he could feel beneath his feet a steady vibration as of some powerful electric force barely held in check.

"Hearken!" Satan's High Priest began, "and ponder carefully. You have seen our holy ritual. You have witnessed the mystic wonders at my command. You have beheld the coming of our Lord Shaitan. You know now how I, his humble servant, can summon and command men of every race and clime. This mighty power is yours to take and wield, if you but say the word. Say but that you are convinced, bow down in subjection to our Lord Shaitan, and while I live you shall be my sword and my hand. Join our mighty sect and when Shaitan at last deems me worthy of rest, you shall follow me as his vicar on earth. You shall be the Sheik-al-Jabal of a world remade for Evil. With but a single word you can take for your own the earth and the fulness thereof. Deny Shaitan now, and you shall die the Death of a Thousand Needles; the death so horrible that even Shaitan himself shudders at the very thought."

The American drew himself up proudly. "Old man," he said, "what superstitious Mongol do you think you have here, that you would have me believe these mummeries to be occult power? You have great power but the wonders you have shown me come not from any supernatural cause, but from a mastery of natural forces. If you would have me cast my lot with you, cast aside this puppet play of devil worship in which neither I nor you believe. Show me the inner workings of these marvels, and then, perhaps, I shall accede to your demand."

Again an involuntary gleam of admiration flitted across the seamed and evil visage.

"So be it. I see it is useless to pretend any further with you. *I believe no more in Shaitan than in any other God. But the fiction had its uses.*" He arose and descended from the ebony throne. "Come with me behind the screen and you shall see the source of my power; the great machine with which I shall sway the minds of all men to my will." He led the way through the door in the lacquered screen, and Dunton followed.

The Secret of Power

AT the threshold the explorer halted in amazement. The entire space, almost half the vast circle of the hemisphere, was filled with a maze of glittering apparatus on a giant scale. Vast coils of gleaming copper to which ran cables thicker than a man's arm. Tubes ten feet high, with elements like steel bridge-structures. Circular rheostats like the twenty-foot constrictors of the Amazonian wilds. Variable condensers with Brobdignagian plates. It was as though two natives of Gulliver's Lilliput had wandered into the interior of a complex modern radio set.

Gradually, the chaotic mass of apparatus took on some order to Dunton's bewildered gaze. There appeared to be two distinct groups; to each of which ran huge conductors from a gigantic distributor board at one end of the space, on which the gleaming bus-bars bulked like copper girders. Each apparatus was fitted with a motor to actuate its members. In the opposite end of the space a motor-generator transformer hummed.

Dunton's attention focussed on the great tubes, only one of which showed by its light that it was active. They were like, yet unlike, the familiar radio tubes he had so often handled.

The priest was speaking: "After long nights of study I wrested from Nature the Secrets which here you see made incarnate. There are only two essential discoveries which are the basis of my power. The first is this.

"As you must know, the flashing to and fro of impulses in the nerve system of the human frame bears a marked similarity to the shuttling of power, light and sound over electric conductors. My researches revealed to me that the analogy is a true one—that from brain through nerve to muscle, from sense organ through nerve to brain, reports and commands flash as flash the impulses of electrical vibrations to and fro over the network of a modern city. The only real difference is in the character of the vibration. I found the peculiar frequency, and then it was a simple matter to construct apparatus to reproduce it. Once this was done, the next step followed—that by impinging a beam of my vibrator on any individual, or by spreading a fan of these radiations over a group or a nation, I could control to a limited extent their thoughts or nervous processes. I found that I could make them evil or good, throw them into a panic of fear, make them belligerent and warlike, or spread a flame of revolt and anarchy through a state or a nation. It was my experimentation which caused the revolution in Russia, the Civil War in China, the wave of murder and crime now sweeping your own country.

"My next problem was one of transportation. When I was ready to grasp the mastery of the world, I needed to be able to bring here and send back to their posts, almost instantaneously, these chosen men. Many more years of study and thought, and I solved that problem. I was led to consider the nature of gravitation; the attraction of one body for another. Here too I found an analogy to a known science, that of electro-magnetism. Gravity, I found, was a magnetism akin to, but not quite the same as, electro-magnetism. Following out the analogy, I found that I could cause the earth to repel rather than attract an individual. I also became able to regulate the strength of the repulsion, i. e., the height to which an individual would levitate.

"Then I evolved a method by which I could make that person fly at any speed I willed to this Tower. By a mere reversal of the process, naturally I could send my subjects to anywhere on earth I willed.

"This second discovery of mine had minor uses. By a system of crossing and intersecting beams of gravito-magnetic force I could erect an invisible and impalpable screen of repulsion anywhere I chose, a screen through which nothing, whether bullet or being, could pass." A grim smile appeared on the lama's visage. "You have

good reason, I believe, to appreciate the efficacy of that device. The electric energy I need is produced in a giant powerhouse operated by a thousand-foot waterfall about ten miles distant."

CHAPTER VI

Trapped!

DUNTON thought of the battle in the gorge, and grinned. "So that's how it was done. Pretty useful trick, I'll say."

"I need not" the lama resumed, "weary you further. You have guessed at the secrets of some of my more theatrical effects. Mass-hynotism, stereopticon, and other childish but useful devices which have come down through the ages; utilized by the fakirs of India, and the tricksters of every land to mystify and delude the credulous."

He turned and led the way to the massive control board in the outer room. "Here is the brain of my network of control. I early found that each race had a slightly different range of nerve-vibration, and so I established seven Towers, six of them smaller replicas of this, in seven lands. Arabia, Manchuria, Russia, Mexico, Brazil, and Abyssinia, each have a Tower of Evil. The nerve-radiations emanating from here are slightly transformed and re-broadcast for the races dominant in the territory roundabout. These six switches, or this master switch alternatively, control this process. To-morrow at dawn, when I swing down this switch, my dreams will at last come true. After long years I shall control the world. Rebellion and anarchy in every land will overthrow the prating womanish rulers, and set up my rule instead.

"My chosen slaves, whom you saw today, will dominate each his land in fealty to me. Seven days will suffice to make the great change. Then will I reverse this other master switch, and my deputies will flock back to these holy precincts. Shaitan will come again, and we shall celebrate our triumph.

"With you it rests, whether you will celebrate that triumph with me, or die in dreadful agony. Stand now again on the audience platform while I ascend my throne. Ponder well your answer, then I shall receive it. The night grows late and I am aweary. I must need rest for tomorrow's work."

Dunton stepped again on the platform that ceased its swaying, and faced the throne, to which the aged lama had again ascended. The explorer's head was in a whirl. He knew now that a very real, a very terrible danger menaced the unsuspecting world. He knew too, that only he could save civilization from a holocaust of evil. This mad priest would keep his word to the very letter. Open defiance could only be a futile gesture. What then? He had better pretend to comply, pretend to be convinced. Then tomorrow, as trusted aide of this madman, he would watch his chance.

"Yes, that's it" he thought "go slow. Lull him into unwariness, then I'll get my two hands around that skinny throat, and—"

"Great Priest" he raised his hand in salutation, "I am convinced. Your power, is greater far than any man has yet attained. I shall be glad to join and work with you. From now on I am yours to command!"

The old priest's reception of this speech, which seemed to be so complete a victory for him, was astounding. His face grew livid, his claw-hands were extended in trembling rage. "Liar!" he shouted, "fool! Do you dare to mock me? Do you dream to deceive me? Look behind you, fool!"

Dunton, in consternation, whirled about. On the screen behind him he saw—himself, with his hands clasped about the throat of the lama. Dumbfounded, he stepped back—as he left the platform the screen went blank.

"Fool!" the old man was still shrieking "did you think I would bare to you all my secrets? That platform, that screen, form my thought reading device. Every secret thought of him who stands there is pictured in vivid pantomime on that screen. And you thought to deceive me!"

Laughter filled the great hemisphere. The lama clapped his hands. Two maroon guards rushed in and seized the American. "Take him away, he dies tomorrow."

"No!—wait, John Dunton, I have changed my mind. You shall die the slow Death of a Thousand Needles. To the lowest dungeon with him, to await his end."

Struggling vaintly, the American was unceremoniously pushed to the well, and floated down to the main hall. There, one of the guards pressed another button, and a black, seemingly bottomless pit yawned in front of him. Into this he was pushed. As he staggered over the verge, he caught a fleeting glimpse of the girl just entering the hall. A glimpse of horror depicted on her beautiful face—and he was precipitated into the yawning pit. Down—down into emptiness . . . .

The Death of a Thousand Needles

FOR what seemed an interminable distance he fell, and just as his nerves were snapping from the imminent crash, his flight was suddenly checked and cushioned, and he was deposited slowly on the ground.

"Well, this looks like the old man means business," Dunton muttered, as he looked about the cell in which he found himself. A dim phosphorescence came from the decaying filth about, and revealed a noisome chamber, whose rough stone walls were black with shiny moisture, and whose floor was covered with rotting debris. Walls and floors were alive with pale crawling creatures of decay.

"God, I'd like to have that mad apostle of evil at my pistol's end!" What a hell the world will be when he is master of it!"

Back and forth, back and forth he paced, tramping a path through the foul ordure. One wild scheme for escape after another passed through his tortured brain, only to be despairingly rejected as their utter futility was quickly revealed. Black despair oppressed him. But all his planning, all his despair, could not keep his thoughts from returning always to the girl, the beautiful jewel in this foul setting.

And so, the long night through, the prisoner paced back and forth in his narrow cell. Sleep was an impossibility, what with the filth of the dungeon and the torturings of his reeling brain. The silence was broken only by the squidge, squidge of Dunton's steps through the slime.

What seemed many hours dragged slowly past. Then, startlingly, the American heard a sharp grating as of stone on stone behind him. Fists clenched, the American whirled. But no human antagonist met his startled eye. Instead from the walls now protruded long needles, gleaming sinister. *"The Death of a Thousand Needles."* the mad lama's phrase flashed into his mind. A thousand needles indeed, aye, more than a thousand surrounded him on every hand!

But wait. No need for panic. As long as he remained away from the bristling walls he was safe. Did the old

devil expect him to rush headlong upon the point? He laughed aloud in relief.

Again the grating of stone upon stone smote his ears. What was this? A moment ago there had been an irregular smear at the base of the wall before him. It was gone! From wall to wall his glance darted. The space seemed smaller. Or did his eyes deceive him. Swiftly he paced the distance. A long moment he waited, while the ominous rasping continued. Again he measured the distance between the imprisoning walls. An icy hand closed about his heart. They were closer together! *Slowly, imperceptibly, the bristling ranks of needles were approaching each other.* Inexorably a horrible death, was closing in on him.

Then indeed, Dunton gave up all hope! "The devil, the inhuman monster! Even the Inquisition had no horror such as this. Well, I'll not stand here quiet to be slowly impaled. When those needles begin to sting me I'll thrust myself upon them and make a quick end of it. I'll not give him the satisfaction of witnessing my lingering agonies."

Grimly the American took his stand, arms folded, in the centre of the cell. Slowly, oh so slowly, the needle points approached. Long minutes passed.

At last the end was at hand. Already some of the fatal points were entering the doomed man's clothing. He closed his eyes and began a last prayer to the God of his fathers. He was resigned. Suddenly the pressure relaxed—a breath of moving air fanned him. He opened his eyes. Miracle of miracles, the walls were swiftly retreating. The needles had disappeared. In a moment all was as before.

Again he heard stone grating on stone. "What, again. Was the release merely a trick to make the torture more lingering?" A black oblong showed in the wall. "Hush" a soft voice came to his ears.

Dunton relaxed. Dimly he descried in the black rectangle the form of the beautiful girl who had so haunted his thoughts.

"Here, quickly, take this," and to his astonishment he found in his hand his beloved automatic.

"Now I feel like a man again! But how in the name of all that's good were you able to make those damnable walls recede? And why have you done this for me? Who are you?"—a thousand questions tumbled from his lips.

"Hush! softly! or we both die the Death. Should he find us here he will condemn us both to eternity in Hell."

Leila's Dream

"I AM called Leila," the soft voice went on in low voiced murmuring. "I am the foster daughter of the great lama, and I serve him in his noble work. Who my own people are, I know not. Sometimes I dream—but this is not the time for that. I have lived here many years, and he has taught me many things—the motions of the moon and the stars, and the greater knowledge that great Shaitan has vouchsafed only to him. He has taught me the languages of all the earth so that when the great day comes I might aid him, the Vicar of Shaitan on earth, to rule wisely—that the greatest evil might come to His people.

"Alway have I prayed to Shaitan that the day might come soon. Never have I doubted the true faith. Till—woe is me!—till you came, fair skinned as I. When I first beheld you something within me drew towards you, somehow I felt a kinship with you. Somehow, then, doubt crept into my mind, doubt of Shaitan and of His teachings. I fought against it, I had nigh won the fight, till I saw them drag you struggling to this foul dungeon. Then I knew, John Dunton, that he was wrong, that Evil was not the great principle, I knew that God was the greater. All this I knew, John Dunton, because—" A flush made more beautiful that flowerlike cheek—"because—"

"Because you love me" Dunton burst forth, "and I love you, my dearest!" And in that cell the two were enfolded in each other's arms.

A long minute they remined thus; their horrible surroundings forgotten. Then, lingeringly they parted, and Leila spoke again.

"It was the best of luck, my dear one, that you were put in this, the cell of a Thousand Needles. Many years ago I found a secret passage in the walls, a passage which was unknown even to him, and I traced it to this cell. There is a spring that causes the walls to withdraw. There is another spring which moves aside one of the great rocks that form the wall.

"I waited till the small hours of the morning, then I stole to where they had placed the clothes in which you were brought. I found your weapon, then I made my way to the entrance of the secret passage, just below the great hall, within the station of the outer guard, and came here, to you!

"My brave, my dear Leila! Thanks only to you am I still alive. But enough of this, we have work to do—my God, the opening has shut itself."

Aghast, the two sprang to the wall where Leila had appeared. It was true. While they had forgotten the world in their rapture, something had moved the great stone and barred the exit. Frantically they pulled and pushed at the great rock, but it was immovable. Then Dunton's usual calmness returned.

"Think a moment, dearest. This device must be planned along the lines of the other secret panels in the tower. How do they work?"

"You are right, there must be some marks which indicate the proper places to press the hidden springs. But it is too dark to see them."

"Then let us wait for the morning. There seems to be a window way up on that wall. See there, where that dark circle breaks the phosphorescent glow. Perhaps, when the sun rises there will be light enough to see the marks."

"The waiting will not be too long, together,"

Dunton slipped off the jeweled robe which he still wore and spread it in a corner. "Come, dear, sit here with me and tell me of the dreams of which you referred. Since first I set eyes on your dear face I have been haunted by some strange familiarity in your features. Perhaps your dreams will give some clue as to who you are."

Leila nestled close against her stalwart lover, and began:

"These dreams of mine are not at all vivid. They are confused and shadowy, but they come back again and again. I seem to be living in a small white house. I have many toys, and I am very happy. There are yellow skinned people about; they sweep and clean. One, a woman, does not sweep and clean, but she is always near me.

"There is another woman, not yellow but white. She seems very dear to me. When I see her in my dreams my heart aches, and an unbearable yearning comes over me.

"There are white men too, sometimes many of them tramp about. They are dressed in beautiful red clothes. Sometimes they give me shiny buttons to play with. At

other times there is just one white man in a red coat. He too seems very dear to me. I kiss him, and he throws me up in the air, and laughs

"But the dream I have oftenest is not pleasant. Time and again I have waked up screaming from its terrors. It is night, and I seem to be awakened by a terrible scream. There are muffled thumpings as of many men rushing about softly. Then my door opens and two dark men run in. One of them holds a cloth in his hand which he throws over my head. There is a sweetish smell—then I wake up."

"By the seven stars, I've got it!" Dunton sat up straight in his excitement. "I know who you are. Great guns, what a coincidence! I know whom you remind me of, now. Major Blakely! You're his daughter, stolen fifteen years ago!

Swiftly he told her of the tale he had heard in the Shanghai Club. Wide-eyed Leila drank in the tale. "Then I'm an Englishwoman. And that old man is planning to ruin my own people. John, you must save them. Oh, if it were only light so that I could see how to get out of here. But tell me all about my father, and my country."

The Fateful Hour

FOR a long time Dunton talked to the girl in his arms, till he saw her pretty head droop and her blue eyes veiled in sleep. Gently he held her, until he too dozed off, exhausted by the stirring emotions of that fateful day.

His adventurous years had habituated Dunton to awakening at any prearranged time, and so, just as a faint paling of the black aperture in the wall told of the near approach of dawn, his eyes opened. He waited yet a moment, till the blackness of the cell had a little lightened; then awakened his new found sweetheart with a kiss.

"Come dear, wake up! We must work quickly. The old man set sunrise as the hour when he will throw the switch. We must get to him before that."

Leila sprang up, and the two ran to the wall through which she had entered. "It should be just about here," the girl murmured. "Yes, see this depression is too regular in shape to be accidental. Here is another, there should be a third so that the three make a triangle—here it is. Now to find the right combination!"

A moment of tentative pressings—then the great rock swung aside. Beyond Dunton glimpsed the beginning of a steep staircase of stone, shiny with the moist drippings of ages. Swiftly Leila closed it.

"There's some of the old devil's magic for him to ponder over," Dunton laughed grimly. "Now, keep behind me and direct me by touching my back—left, right, and the small of my back for stop. Don't talk!"

Guided thus, the explorer and the long-lost English girl hastened silently upward. The staircase seemed interminable as the pressing need for haste goaded them. At last Dunton felt the signal to halt.

They listened. Not a sound penetrated to them. In a barely perceptible whisper Dunton directed. "Open the door, then jump aside. When I have gone out, close it again, and you stay here till I knock six times on the wall—three slow, three fast.

A rectangle of opalescent light appeared. Beyond was the spiral slope that first had brought the American to the dome. Just above him a maroon guard was floating upward.

Dunton stepped out onto the slope. At once he felt the levitating force grip him. He floated on and up.

Almost at once the summit of the slope was reached. As the attraction was released momentarily for the opening of the trap above, Dunton viciously struck the guard's head with his clubbed automatic. Then immediately the explorer ripped off the now unconscious Mongol's maroon robe and hat, and donned them in mid-air as he rose to pass into the great hemisphere above.

A scene of great activity burst on Dunton as he reached the floor of his objective. A horde of the lama's minions were rushing about in the ordered confusion of an enormous enterprise. A hum slowly rising in pitch told of the starting of the huge generator. The screen was gone, and the great tubes were beginning to glow cherry red as the electrical current commenced to heat their filaments.

Dunton merged himself with the busy throng till he reached the rear of the thought transference screen; then crouched there, securely hidden. To his delight, he found that the screen was a network of fine wire, and thus, from his dark vantage point the explorer could see every corner of the brilliantly lighted room, himself unseen. Before him Shaitan's High Priest was seated on his throne, listening to reports and dispatching orders through a constant stream of messengers.

A deep-toned gong reverberated through the space. The old lama arose as a sudden paralysis seized the scurrying crowd. The priest raised his right hand high, and spoke:—

"All is now prepared. In a moment the sun's rays will gild the topmost peaks of the mountains, and the Shaitan's Day will dawn. I would be alone in the hour of His triumph, alone with Shaitan. Ye have done well, ye faithful servants of the true Master of the World. Go ye now each to his quarters, and await my call. When next ye behold me ye shall have received your reward."

Behind the Woman

AS the crowded space cleared, Dunton gasped with horror. Leila, whom he thought safely hidden in the secret passage, was making her way through the retreating mob to the lama's throne. The priest saw her. "What do you here, maiden? Have you not heard my command?"

"Father," the clear voice replied, "think you that I could be any other where at this moment. Despite your command or that of any other one, my place is here."

Dunton realized that the speech was for his ears. In spite of his distress he glowed with pride at her desire to be at his side in the hour of danger.

"So be it! I had not thought of thee, but I am indeed glad that thou art here. For look you, those fools who have labored here, and whose usefulness to Shaitan and to me is now at an end will indeed receive their reward ere they again behold me. Their quarters are filled with a most deadly gas, and their next meeting with me will be in Shaitan's realm. Silence now, while I invoke Him to witness His triumph."

The old man strode to the center of the room, raised his arms to the image of his Master on the dome overhead, and intoned a prayer.

"O Lord of Evil, great Shaitan, Thy humble servant brings thee now the great gift which he so long ago vowed to make Thee. The whole world and all its people I lay at thy feet, asking no reward, content but that Thou shall be glorified. I invoke that Thou accept this my offering!"

Did Dunton dream it, or did an unholy expression of

evil triumph illumine the face of the fiend painted on the dome?

"And now to throw the master switch," the priest turned toward the great board.

"Stop!" Dunton had leaped from his hiding place with his menacing automatic outthrust. "Stop, or I shoot!"

The startled priest stared incredulously at the sudden apparition. A moment of realization, then with a snarl of baffled rage he turned. With uncanny swiftness he seized Leila and swung her before him as a living shield. Then only he spoke—

"So, you think to defeat me in the very instant of realization. Shoot then, but your woman's God will not let you shoot a woman even in his defense." With this he commenced backing slowly toward the switch which would debase the globe.

Dunton was aghast. He must choose between killing his beloved and the ruin of the world. Whitefaced he tried to force his reeling brain to make the awful decision. But Leila was quiescent. Frantically she beat and clawed at the old man's face, frenziedly she kicked and struggled. That slight form seemed to be invested with a strength almost equal to the madman's own. He reeled and staggered. Then with a final surge of desperate force she broke loose from the lama's clutch—he fell with her fierce thrust. But as he fell, he reached for the switch—his hands grasped—not the switch but two huge terminals. A scream of agony—a blinding flash—a smell of burnt flesh—and an inert body dropped to the floor.

When the two saviors of the world somewhat recovered from the terrific strain of that scene, and determined that the arch-enemy was indeed dead, Dunton seized a small ebony chair and turned toward the intricate maze of apparatus. Leila detained him.

"What are you going to do, dear?"

"Smash up every bit of the hellish devices so that never again can anyone use them to menace civilization. I want to destroy every vestige of that product of distorted genius, and then forget even the little I know of its working!"

"But wait just a minute, John. Think first of those poor slaves whom we saw last night. They are still under the spell. If you destroy the apparatus now, they will remain forever in its power. Why not bring them back here first and release them?"

"You are right, dear heart. And now that I stop to think, only one of the old devil's inventions is essentially evil. It would be a shame to destroy that marvelous transportation device—that at least is of tremendous value.

"Now let me see, there are the keys which will bring back those poor lost souls. 'Turn this way'—he said." And Dunton operated the switches he had pointed out.

"Now let's get down into the garden. Good clean air will be most welcome after that cell, and all we have gone through in this horrible place."

Again they entered the gorgeous garden. Beauty had been there before, but an evil beauty. Now the bright morning sun illumined a flowery fairyland whose fresh colors bespoke the beauty of Nature's loveliness.

"Look there, dear—they are coming."

Over the snowy caps of the towering peaks that rimmed the gardens, now appeared, one after another, what seemed huge birds. High in that illimitable blue they soared, then in great swooping spirals they descended. From every point of the compass they came, till the garden was again peopled with a throng of men of every race. Again they walked the garden with their lack-lustre eyes.

Released!

WHEN the sky was clear again, Dunton ascended again to the great hall. He found a sliding panel through which he could see the garden.

"How am I going to release them?" he pondered. He walked over to the tubes which he knew produced the nerve-vibration. Only two were glowing, the same two which had been lit when first he had beheld them.

"Hm, perhaps these control the vibrations. I'll chance it!" Picking up the ebony chair he had intended to use before, he sent it crashing through the glass of the two tubes. Then he leaped back to his lookout. Far below him he could see the crowd of men. But no longer were they moving about aimlessly, mechanically. Most were still, as if in bewilderment, but even from that great height the American could determine that there was no mechanical stiffness above the gestures of those who were not still.

Hastily he descended to the garden. It was true. Bewildered, wondering where they were and how they had been brought there, the erstwhile robots were human once again!

Little remains to be told. After the explanation of what had occurred to them had finally penetrated the astounded minds of the freed ones, they aided Dunton with a will in obliterating that part of the lama's apparatus which produced and controlled the nerve-vibrations. It was unanimously decided that the unbelievable tale should not be told to the world, and it was also voted that the transportation rays be not used until their operation had been thoroughly studied by qualified scientists.

The experience of the explorer stood all in good stead in organizing and conducting the return to civilization. Major Blakely's astonished joy at the recovery of his long-lost daughter need not be described, as need not the simple ceremony which united the American explorer and the maiden.

One incident is, however, worthy of mention. As the long cavalcade struggled over the summit of a pass through the mountains guarding the gardens of the Tower of Evil, John and Leila intoned the immemorial phrase which every Tibetan voices as he reaches the highest point of his journey from one side of a mountain range to the other. Never had that phrase been more approriate:—

"Lha Gyalo! De Tamche Pham."

(The Gods win! The demons are defeated!)

THE END.

FOR STORIES OF SCIENTIFIC CRIMES AND CRIMINALS READ

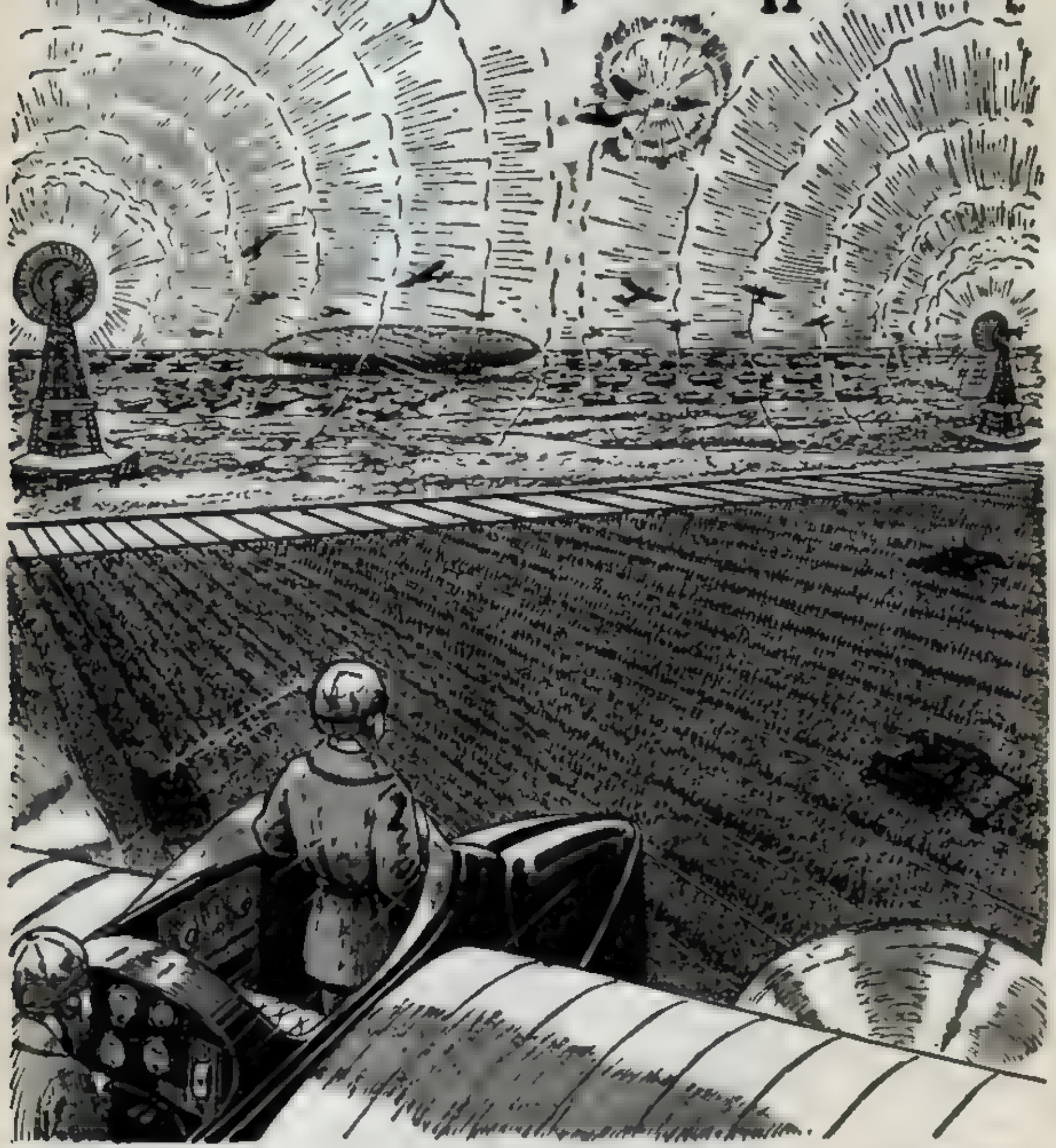
AMAZING DETECTIVE TALES

Whose Editorial Commissioner is ARTHUR B. REEVE, Creator of Craig Kennedy

July Issue on Sale June 15

Electropolis

by Otfrid von Hanstein



(Illustration by Paul)

No plane took fire, but none reached us. It were as though there were a glass wall between them and us.

THERE are many persons who are superstitious and imagine that Friday brings bad luck. Heaven knows I too have to watch out to keep from becoming superstitious, myself!

It was eight o'clock in the evening. Thank God, not much more could happen to me that day! There had been quite enough already for my modest needs. That very morning—it was to laugh! I was getting as much mail as a busy office! I could see by looking at my good landlady, Frau Müllensiefen, that this big mail had considerably raised me in her esteem. Dear Frau Müllensiefen! If she only knew! To be sure, the envelopes of all those letters had splendid addresses. I got letters only from leading firms—Borsig, Krupp, Siemens, and the like. But, sad to say, the contents of the letters were always the same! They all said:

"My dear sir: We are very sorry that we cannot avail ourselves of your services, since for the present we are not taking on any additional employees. We are returning your letters of recommendation herewith. Respectfully yours . . . ."

All these firms seemed to have just a single form for letters of rejection!

That morning I had had three such in my mail. I had made five visits, all without result. And that evening I had been to see my guardian.

"My dear boy," he said, "you are now twenty-one. I'll gladly admit that you've been diligent. You've good testimonials, and you've passed your examinations in the technical school with distinction. But now—you are of age, and my guardianship is at an end. I still have your inheritance to give you. It is very little, to be sure, since your education and your support have cost money. There are still some three hundred marks* left, which I will now hand over to you. You have learned something, you are healthy and vigorous, and you must now stand on your own feet. You understand that I myself have a large family—"

My guardian had always been a stranger to me. When my mother died, I had just finished my preliminary studies. At that time I had felt that my guardian was right in advising me not to continue at school, but to get out and earn some money in a hurry. But I am inclined now to think he was wrong. I had worked for three years at the Junker plant with Borsig, and at a large electrical plant. Then I had put in two years in the technical school—and here was I without a position!

I went home very much depressed. What now? Three hundred marks—and as good as shown the door by my guardian! Three hundred marks would support me at most two months. I must at once seek a position. I was very gloomy. I determined to take the final step. As a young engineer I evidently had no prospects, but would someone perhaps hire me as a mechanic or workman? I must put my pride in my pocket.

As I entered my room Frau Müllensiefen called to me: "There's another letter for you!"

I shrugged my shoulders. From whom now? I had been keeping a record and always crossed off the names when I got an answer, which was of course a refusal.

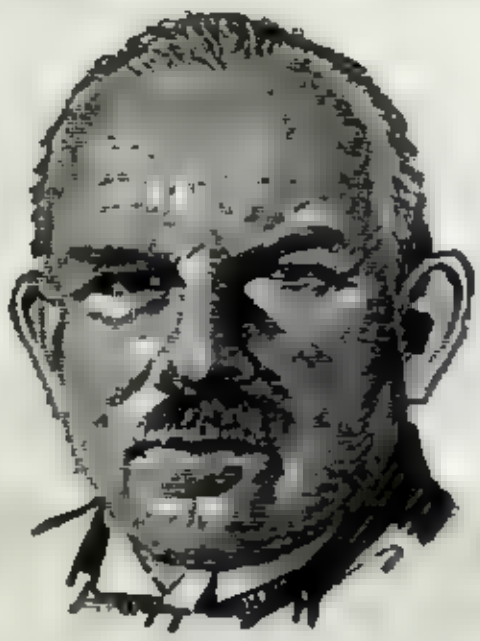
I turned on the light and stepped to my desk. Yes, there really was a letter there, from Berlin, in a grey business envelope without a return address. I opened it. This is what it said:

"You asked me for a position. I shall expect you Monday evening at nine o'clock in the Hotel Adlon.

(*Signed*)
Frank Allister."

I read the letter three times, shaking my head. I walked up and down the room and then re-read the letter again. Frank Allister? This was very strange. Who was Frank Allister? Where had I seen that name? The more I thought of it, the more perplexed I became. Frank Allister—why, that had happened today. It was in the afternoon in the Café Bauer. I had stepped in a moment to look at the papers, that is to say, at the advertisements of positions open. While there my eye had fallen on this advertisement:

"WANTED AT ONCE, A YOUNG ACTIVE GERMAN ENGINEER FOR WORK OUTSIDE OF THE COUNTRY. REQUIREMENTS: HEALTH AND ABILITY. ONLY THOSE WHO KNOW THEY ARE WHAT I WANT WILL APPLY. FRANK AL-



OTFRID VON HANSTEIN

FROM the hundreds of science fiction stories that are printed each year, there are a few that stand out above the others because of the great ideas contained in them, because of their thrilling incidents and the daring and imagination of the author.

Such an outstanding story is "Electropolis," which we take pleasure in presenting for the first time in America.

Our author's theme is simply stupendous. Imagine a desolate stretch of land as large as a European country being transformed into a literal Garden of Eden through the aid of the forces of nature harnessed by a scientific genius such as the world has seldom seen.

Our author has given us here a novel which is certain to be remembered for a long time. Hundreds of millions of dollars pass hands in gigantic deals; empires are bought and sold, vast domains of power are harnessed and all by two men who had a few years ago made a bare living by shining shoes.

We recommend this story enthusiastically to our readers as one of the best of the year.

* About seventy-five dollars.

LISTER, HOTEL ADLON."

I remember I had read this advertisement—several times thinking: Should I write to him? But I concluded that the advertisement clearly indicated a swindler or a lunatic and I had not written. But now here comes an answer to an advertisement that I had not written about. How could it be?

A Mysterious Interview

I REFLECTED again. No indeed, I was sure I had *not* written. Nor had I spoken with anyone about it. I was sure of this, and now—

"Frau Mullensiefen!" I called. When she came, I said, "I can't seem to see very well; my eyes are tired. Please read me this letter."

From her lips it read just as it had to me.

"Isn't the signature 'Frank Allister'?"

"Yes,—Frank Allister. But if you want to be there at nine, you'll have to be quick about it."

"Right-o!"

"By the way there was someone here this afternoon."

"What! Who was it?"

"I don't know. He looked as if he came from the police. He asked all kinds of questions about you."

"I'm not afraid of the police."

"That's just what I thought."

I raced down the stairs and just caught a bus. It was one minute of nine when I reached the Adlon. Of course I still didn't understand and had absolutely no hope. Quite the contrary. I was pretty sure some friend was playing a practical joke on me. Of course! While I was standing in the hotel door I saw it clearly. Neither the envelope nor the letter had a printed heading. Some one of my acquaintances had read the advertisement and written the letter. Probably he was right now standing somewhere nearby to laugh at me when I came out again from the hotel! Should I go in or not? It would be silly not to see it through, now that I was here. And I had the letter.

I went into the office and asked, a little timidly, "May I see Mr. Allister?"

"What is your name?"

I gave the clerk my card, which he read. He nodded. "You are expected. Boy, take the gentleman to Mr. Allister, Room 273."

I started involuntarily. I had to hold on to the door for a moment. The floor seemed slipping from under my feet. Mr. Allister expected me! How was that possible? The one man to whom I had not applied!

We stood before the door of the room. The boy opened it and I stepped in. I saw a slender man, evidently an American, sitting at a desk working. Just as I entered, a large clock in the room struck nine loudly.

Mr. Allister looked up, cast a hasty glance at me, at the large clock, and at his watch. He nodded and said, "Have a seat."

I seated myself beside the desk on a chair which he indicated. There was something strange in the voice of this man, something dry, monotonous, and impersonal. With his eyes still bent on his work, he said, "You asked me for a position."

I reflected. I had not asked him for a position. It was some error. Should I tell him so? Should I actually try to get myself a position by fraud? I felt that it was impossible to deceive this extraordinary man. Perhaps I was only dreaming all this, anyway.

"Mr. Allister, I should of course be happy if you could use me. But I didn't apply."

For a moment I thought that a smile hovered over the leathery face of the American.

"You applied in person; you told me yourself."

I jumped up. "Mr. Allister, you are confusing me with someone else."

"You said it to me with your eyes, this afternoon at four o'clock in the Café Bauer. I was standing beside you when you read the advertisement. With your eyes you applied for the position."

I had an uncanny feeling. "But how did you know my name?"

"Well, if you leave letters addressed to yourself lying about—"

"Mr. Allister—"

"Time is money. I can't tell you everything now. And it doesn't matter. I'm ready to hire you. Beginning to-day. Monthly salary fifty English pounds, with free board and lodging. Your contract for three years' stay. An increase in salary every three months, fifty per cent. I am permitted to discharge you at any time if you don't come up to my expectations, but I must then pay you three months' salary and your fare home. Do you agree?"

I was thunderstruck! This was a princely position. A thousand marks* a month, with increases, and with free board and lodging as well! There was certainly something phony about it. I could not help hesitating.

"Well? I can't offer you any more than—"

"Mr. Allister, I—what sort of a position is this? What will my duties be?"

"I can't tell you anything about it now. Besides, I am only the representative of our common chief."

"Who is this chief?"

"Mr. Schmidt."

I stared at him, and he looked me earnestly in the eye.

Is It a Hoax?

"I UNDERSTAND! You don't know what to make of it. Young man, I have confidence in you. Look here! Here are the applications which I have received. This afternoon there were seven hundred and forty-eight. I read them and threw them in the waste-basket. You have pleased me, and I'm ready to hire you. I have confidence in you, and you must have it in me also! I can't tell you any more now. But you may rely on there being nothing dishonorable that you are to do. It is work of the greatest and most sublime significance for the world. Now, I unfortunately have no more time. Here is the contract. If you sign it, I shall give you an advance of five hundred marks, and at midnight tonight you will enter your position. If not—well, I shall not urge you. Here is the contract. I have signed a copy of it. Here are the five hundred marks. Either tonight at midnight you will be on the flying field of Tempelhof** at the machine prepared for Frank Allister, or else you will be back here in the hotel at eleven and return me the money."

"Mr. Allister, you don't know me, and yet you are going to give me the money. But what if I do not come either to the hotel or to the flying field?"

"Then I should travel away with the feeling that a German had cheated an American. It will not be so! Now I am busy. Good-bye!"

In a few minutes I stood again in front of the hotel. It was twenty minutes past nine. I looked about in-

*About $250. **The Berlin airport.

voluntarily for the friends who had played this trick on me. Heavens—the next day was April first!

To be sure! The gang had fooled me well. Of course it had not been the real Mr. Allister, the one with the advertisement in the paper. It was some young American whom my friends had taken into their confidence. And of course the clerk at the Adlon was bribed. But where did they get the bills? Naturally they were counterfeits, some sort of stage money.—And just then Rudolf Sperber came along! I laughed at him.

"Well roared, lion!" I called out, with affected gaiety.

"What does that mean?"

"Mr. Frank Allister sends his regards. Where are the other fellows?"

He looked at me in amazement. "Anyway, you're in a better humor than you were this noon. Did you have a drink at your guardian's?"

"No, it was a whiff of strong tobacco from you fellows."

"Really, you're a scream!"

"What do you mean, a scream? I signed up with Mr. Frank Allister for three years. A thousand marks a month, traveling expenses, and more besides. Old man, you know it better than I do. But I hope the real Frank Allister doesn't get wise to your nerve."

Rudolf grasped my arm. "Fritz, what on earth is the matter with you? Come along. We're all over in the Patzhofer in Friedrichstrasse."

"Naturally."

We walked fast, saying nothing more. Our friends were sitting in the back room. It was our little club, from technical school days.

"Here I am. You did it well, you scamps."

They looked at me with gloomy faces. We were all in about the same boat, except that the rest at least had parents. But I noticed that Rudolf was whispering to Walter Gerhard, the president of the club. Then both looked searchingly at me. I was struck with a sort of malicious humor. I raised the glass of beer which the waiter brought me and cried, "Long live Mr. Allister!"

Walter stepped over to me. "What do you mean by Mr. Allister? Rudolf has just been telling me."

I was rather peeved. "Don't bother, your premature April fool joke was very clever."

Walter had become serious. "I don't know of any April fool joke."

"O Heavens, don't bother about it! Do you hear? You wrote me a letter and signed it Frank Allister. Then you got me into the Hotel Adlon. But where did you get the American and the wonderful counterfeit money?"

Now they had all become serious and were standing about me. "We don't know a thing about it! Honest! Go on, tell us quick, what's up?"

It was my turn now to be amazed—their faces were so honest in their surprise. I showed them the letter I had received, told them of the interview in the hotel, and finally laid the five hundred-mark bills on the table.

Walter Gerhard, who was older than the rest of us, read the letter and the contract and said seriously, "Truly, we didn't play any joke, we—"

I interrupted him, with trembling lips. "Then—then—you think—it was the real Frank Allister, and the contract—"

Walter had the money in his hand. "At any rate the bills are genuine."

I clung fast to the edge of the table. "Yes, but then—but then—"

Walter shook his head. "It's strange all right. And where are you to go?"

"I have no idea. I'm to find out tonight at the flying field."

"A most remarkable affair." Walter reached for his hat and coat. "See here, we'll go again to the Hotel Adlon. I'll come along, as your older friend. If this Frank Allister is an honorable man, he will understand."

I pressed his hand.

"The rest of us will wait until you come back."

It was half-past ten when we were again in the hotel. Meanwhile the clerk with whom I had talked had gone off duty, and another was there.

"May we see Mr. Frank Allister?"

"Who?"

"Mr. Frank Allister."

He looked in the register. "I don't know him, he isn't registered here."

He turned his attention to other guests, and we went out again. Walter anxiously pressed my hand. "If I hadn't seen the contract," he said, "I should think you had been dreaming."

I looked at him in horror. "Perhaps I am still dreaming now."

He hit me hard on the shoulder. "You're crazy; we are wide awake."

"But what are we to do now? I still have the five hundred marks."

"We must anyway be at the flying field before twelve. Then we shall see. If nobody there knows about this Allister, then we must take the money to the police tomorrow."

"And if it's true, after all?"

He looked doubtfully at me. "It's very strange—just you, and over seven hundred applicants."

I seized his hand. "It's all the same to me! Here in Berlin I have nothing. My guardian has put me out of his house. If things are right, I shall go along, wherever it is."

Walter looked at me seriously. "I won't advise you, but I would do the same thing myself."

CHAPTER II

A Startling Revelation

IT was eleven o'clock, and we had no more time to lose. We could not tell our other friends, and we did not want to. I did not want them all at the flying field, to see me made a fool of. We were still standing before the hotel. "We must take a taxi," said I. "I must in any case go home first, if I am really leaving."

At this moment an empty taxi came cruising up to us.

"Twenty-six Elsasserstrasse!"

"I know," the chauffeur said in a monotone.

We were sitting in the taxi. "Didn't the driver just say: 'I know?' How can he know where I live?"

"Don't be foolish. He means, he knows where Elsasserstrasse is."

But I perceived that he too did not exactly believe what he was saying.

It took only a few moments to reach my rooming-house. I quickly threw my few things into a suit-case, and we rushed downstairs again. We were on the way once more at quarter-past eleven.

"If it really comes true, you'll have to pay my landlady tomorrow and tell my guardian."

"Don't worry about that, old top."

Promptly at quarter of twelve we were on the flying field; not at the door, but right on the field itself. We

had been admitted at once, and as we got out of the taxi, we saw before us a machine ready to start.

I asked a gentleman standing beside it, "Pardon me, do you know where there is a machine ready for Mr. Frank Allister somewhere here?"

"Certainly, this machine."

I felt as though an icy hand were passing down my spine. By the light of the bright lamp I saw that my friend had turned pale.

A gentleman now came out from behind the machine. I recognized Frank Allister. He raised his finger to his cap and said, "Well, I knew you were coming. We still have ten minutes. You start at one minute after midnight."

I gathered my courage together. "Where am I going?"

"At midnight the first of April comes in. At nine in the morning on April sixth you will enter your position. You know, of course, that your salary begins already at midnight."

"And where do I take up my duties?"

" In Desert City."

"And where is Desert City?"

Frank Allister replied, as though it were the most natural thing in the world, "In the middle of the Australian desert."

Now my friend Walter, for whom things were getting too much, took a hand. "Sir, I am the older friend of this young man. What are your intentions toward him? What sort of a contract is it? What strange things are these you are talking about?"

Mr. Allister looked surprised. "I think it is a very favorable contract for so young a gentleman."

"You can't persuade me that in six days from now my friend can take up a job in the middle of the Australian desert!"

Rapid Transit!

MR. ALLISTER looked at his watch. "We still have six minutes." Taking a notebook from his pocket, he continued: "From here to Australia is about thirteen thousand kilometers*. You know that a hundred and twenty kilometers an hour is not much for a good plane. So there is absolutely no reason why this distance could not be flown in one hundred and seventeen hours. At that rate you would already be there on the spot at nine o'clock in the evening on the fifth of April. But we must take into account the change in the time, since you are flying east. Between here and Australia there is nine hours difference. Also you will change machines five times, and that means a loss of half an hour each time.

"You leave here at midnight, and on April first at eight in the evening, local time, you will be at Trebizond, in Turkey on the Black Sea.

"That is two thousand kilometers. You leave at eight-thirty; at seven the next morning, local time, you are in Teheran, Persia, that's a short jump of only twelve hundred kilometers.

"On April three at two in the morning you are in Hyderabad, India, a distance of two thousand kilometers. At midnight the same day you reach Colombo, Ceylon, a distance of two thousand seven hundred kilometers. On April fifth at three-thirty in the morning you reach Kroe in Sumatra. On April sixth at seven in the morning you cross Cambridge Gulf in Australia, and at eight sharp you land in Desert City. In the last two days you have, to be sure, to cover three thousand kilometers each day. If you land in Desert City at eight, you have a full hour to look at your home, and there's absolutely no reason why you can't enter your position at nine."

Walter had put his arm about me. We could say nothing. We stared silently at this man who talked of a thirteen thousand kilometer trip through the air with such exactness and indifference as if he were telling us of a flight from Berlin to Breslau.

"Time, sir."

A face was turned to us from the control seat of the plane. It was a dark brown face, the features very sharp, really a somewhat uncanny countenance, and there was also a very foreign and oriental tone in the accent.

Mr. Allister looked at his watch. "You have one minute more."

I seemed to be in a dream, and I think Walter felt the same way. I pulled a hundred-mark bill from my pocket. "Pay my landlady."

I could say no more. I felt myself lifted into the cabin of the plane. At the same moment the engine started, the wheels ran along the ground for a few seconds, and before I could even step to the window to wave again to my friend, the giant bird was already rising into the air. It circled upward and shot through the night, with the ocean of streets of the great city below me.

My head was dazed. I felt no joy. I felt that I was in the power of strange men and that I had committed a terrible blunder. It became dark round about us. The sea of light of Berlin grew pale, and the night swallowed us up.

Now for the first time it occurred to me that I was alone in the cabin of the plane. I looked about me. Mr. Allister had not come along!

It was nothing new for me to sit in a plane, since I had served a whole year at the Junker plant, but I had never seen so wonderful a cabin. Within, all was panelled wood. A great armchair, with some mechanism to make it a very comfortable reclining chair, invited me to rest in it.

The electric lighting made it bright and cheerful in the cabin. Beside the chair was a folding table, and in the wall were many little cabinets with inscriptions like this:

Cold Food —— Boiling Water —— Coffee Machine —— Teapot —— Wine —— Icecold Lemonade —— Books and Maps —— Newspapers.

I had become calm. I was quite alone in this cabin, and from what Mr. Allister had said, no landing was planned for two thousand kilometers. It now occurred to me that during the entire day, what with my various unpleasant surprises, I had eaten almost nothing. Since the cabin was apparently arranged solely for my disposal, the provisions in the cabinets, if there were any, must also be for me.

I opened a cabinet marked "Cold Food." Well! Mr. Allister or his chief, the mysterious "Mr. Schmidt" in the Australian desert, seemed to have no bad cuisine. There was a most appetizing cold roast goose. My eye fell on sausages, delicious looking ham, and bread and butter, and from the cabinet came a cold breeze. It was a frigidaire.

Why should I hold back? Why should the goose go begging?

*A kilometer is 0.62 miles. A thousand kilometers is roughly 600 miles.

New Scenes

I BEGAN to enjoy the adventure! What could happen to me? I had seven hundred marks in my pocket, my advance pay and the remainder of my inheritance. If worst came to worst, I could get along for a while. I reflected that I had expected to pass a very depressed evening in my room—and now look at me!

Roast goose was no common thing in my life. It was strange how much of it disappeared down my throat, not to mention the other good things—the sausage, the ham, and the cheese. The wine too was not bad. When I had carefully stowed the remainder of the food in the frigidaire, put the used dishes into a cabinet designated as the washing machine, and lighted a good cigar taken from the humidor, I put the bottle of wine beside the armchair and got out of the book cabinet the maps and travel books of Asia. My condition I found not only romantic but also very comfortable.

Still I could not help wondering. Was I actually, despite my youth, such a genius? How was it that just I was selected from over seven hundred applicants? Well, "Mr. Schmidt" probably had confidence in Mr. Allister's judgment of human nature, and if Mr. Allister thought me a genius, why should I contradict him?

At any rate, one miracle was explained. Mr. Allister had intimated that he had sent the taxi to the hotel for me. He did know human nature; he knew that I would return to the hotel. Probably he had instructed the clerk to deny any knowledge of him.

Why? I perceived that I was thinking more slowly. The day with its excitement, the strong wine, the rich wood—how comfortable the chair felt! The plane flew splendidly. The motor worked to perfection. The gentle vibration of the cabin was pleasant. I had often flown, but always out in the control seat. How soft the chair was—how comfortable the floor felt under foot. I yawned, finished the bottle, threw the butt of my cigar into the ash tray, and leaned back. Automatically the chair changed into a couch, and my eyes closed.

"Frau Müllensiefen — Frau Müllensiefen!"

I awoke. In my half-awake condition it seemed to me as though someone had knocked on the door and roused me. I sat up and looked about drowsily. I had no idea where I was, until recollection at last came back to me. The cabin—the plane! Heavens, I was not in my room, good Frau Müllensiefen was part of the past—I was in the plane, Heaven knew where!

I stepped to the window. Before preparing to sleep, I had pulled down the shades. I pressed a button, and they flew up, while the light went out at the same time. I looked at the clock. It was eight in the morning.

I gazed out the window. We must have been flying high. Beneath me was a mighty mountain landscape. There were splendid forests far off, out of which very jagged conical rocks jutted up. There were mountains with eternal snows, their peaks partly veiled by mist.

I forgot all my anxiety. Where was I? On the wall was a large map of the route from Berlin to Trebizond. On this map was a black star. When I looked closely, I saw that this star was moving along very slowly. The star then represented the plane in which I sat. By some automatic device the star slipped over the map and indicated at each moment the position in the map over which we were flying.

I had slept through Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary. Beneath me, under my eyes intoxicated by the bizarre beauty of these mountains, lay the peaks of the Carpathians.

Poetry and prose! I turned from the view and went into the little wash room. I washed in pleasantly cool water and then took from a cabinet a thermos bottle of excellent coffee and helped myself to a tin of milk, bread, butter, and good ham.

What a life! And at the same time we were gliding over the mountains, and these were gradually opening up into wooded slopes.

A few hours later, we were flying lower. At my feet lay a splendid large city with bright domes and towers and broad streets in which people swarmed like ants. This city lay beside a stormy sea, over which great ships were sailing. On the map I saw: Odessa!

It was Odessa on the Black Sea. I was flying over Odessa, instead of sitting in my little room writing applications which would be refused. I thought of Berlin. What would my landlady say? Probably Walter was even now at my guardian's.

I sat by the window. The plane was violently rocked. Now the Black Sea was below us. The waves dashed high, and I felt as though I were in a motion picture. Hour after hour passed. Slowly it became night. I saw a strip of shore.

A whistle sounded in my cabin. I had finished my goose; land was before us, and the plane was descending lower. I saw a coastline divided into many bays. Before me was a city, an oriental city with slim towering minarets. Behind, the ground rose in terraces. Great caravans of camels were approaching. Now an electric sign flashed in the cabin: "Change in Trebizond in five minutes." This sign was of course in English.

Beyond Civilization

IN great excitement I got my suitcase ready. Trebizond! Almost the very end of Turkey. Recollections awoke in me—strange yearnings, tales of fantastic travels.

The landing wheels crunched over soft sand, the motor was shut off, and I heard wild screams about me. The plane stood still, and the cabin door was opened. A dark-skinned fellow stood before me. He was wrapped in a long white mantle, with a silk turban on his head. His bare black legs showed under the white mantle, and he had rings on his toes. "Good evening, mister," he said.

He took the suit-case, and I got out. I stood in a great square. About me were hundreds of screaming, gesticulating people. All were in gay oriental garments, all were busy, but nobody was doing anything.

"Please, mister." The dark fellow took my hand. I saw that his nails were colored with henna. Before me stood another plane, exactly like the first. "Quick, mister, you were a half-hour late."

I was pushed in, the door was shut, the sound of the shrieking people became softer, and the wheels slid over the sand. The plane rose into the air. It was the holy month of Ramadan, and wreaths of gaily colored lights encircled the slender columns of the minarets. The gay picture beneath me vanished, like a tale from the Arabian Nights. Below me now lay a desert, and in the mists of evening I saw another caravan slowly going out into the waste.

I slept again, while my plane glided over the hills of Kurdistan. It is morning. I have again drunk coffee, but this time the bread had a different taste, and instead of ham I had a chicken roasted in oil. I no longer think about the fact that I have not once seen the pilot of my plane. The machine itself is just like the first.

It is seven in the morning. It must be very hot out-

(Illustration by Paul)

Out of the earth rose a little car that seemed a cross between an electric car and an elevator.

side. Below me little houses are bobbing up. I see Mohammedan mosques, splender minarets, and brilliant palaces. Again the sign lights up: Teheran, the capital of Persia. Again there is a crowd of people, but this time they are solemn Persians, with serious faces. Again the quick change. I could have wept. Teheran! The city of the peacock throne, and no time to enjoy it!

Again the desert, an eternal lonely waste, with the pitiless sun blazing down. The trip is growing tiresome. The sun's heat penetrates the walls of the cabin. The motor operates evenly. This plane is like the last, only this time dinner consists of pungent curried mutton and rice, ready for me in a thermos jar. This time I am enticed by strange fruit, and I reach not for wine but for the chilled lemonade.

The desert vanishes, and beneath me are again wild mountains with fearful abysses and peaks. Horsemen on bold steeds, clad in fantastic garments, ride the passes. It is Afghanistan, the land of mystery. I cannot make out any details, since we are high in the air.

It becomes late evening, the second evening I pass in my journey over the earth. There is a great river below me, cities with noble palaces, white shining marble temples by shimmering waters, surrounded by palm groves. I forget to eat. The ship descends lower, and at my feet is India.

At midnight comes the change. This time I see gentle Hindoos with slim brownish bodies and kindly dark eyes. Again the haste, again the yearning in my breast to see and explore these strange lands—but already the wheels are turning, already we are soaring up above the shimmering fairy dream of Hyderabad.

It was early morning, when we passed over the sea of houses of Bombay. It was a day of splendid marvels, but pitilessly the plane sped on. It was becoming evening again, when we reached the coast. Then we glided out to sea, over majestic waves rolling at our feet.

Midnight! I start from sleep. The sea is still below me. There are no ships, only the full moon and the stars up above. What if the motor should fail now!

Two o'clock in the morning, and a coast appears before us. We fly along it. Dense primeval forests, precipitous, jagged, rocky coasts are close below us. At times a settlement appears, a farmhouse, a village of naked natives. I can tell from the map that the splendid island at my feet is Ceylon and the city before my eyes Colombo, the paradise of this earth.

Another day, a whole day, flying over the sea, then

a last landing. It is a village, where a few unclad natives are about us: Kroe, in Sumatra.

The last day and the last night are here. On April first I left Berlin, at the start of the day. This evening is the fifth, and tomorrow — !

Morning comes at last, very early morning, seven o'clock. It is exactly as Mr. Allister said. Below us a wild coast, a bay without a city. It is Cambridge Gulf, and the land is Australia. It is a sorry land, a sorry desert, here and there overgrown with dense wild shrubbery.

The plane sinks to earth. A man opens the door, and I climb out. I totter around, being "land sick," for my body is accustomed to the motion of the plane. As I look about, a hot breeze from the desert blows upon me, in spite of the coolness of the morning.

There stand a few huts of the natives, likewise a few equally wretched shacks made of corrugated sheet iron.

The man smiles at me. "Please, Desert City," he said.

My heart sank. Was this Desert City?

Again the man went on in English: "Eight o'clock. Mr. Schmidt expects you in his office at nine."

Half dead and in very low spirits I followed the man, who led me to one of the wretched sheet iron huts.

CHAPTER III

A Strange Journey

MY gloom was now complete. The sheet iron shack into which I was taken was an absolutely bare room, containing nothing but bathing facilities and, in a little anteroom, a simple bed, table, and chair. When we entered, an old woman was engaged in getting the bath ready, while other women were bringing water for it in buckets which they carried on their heads. Otherwise there was very little life in Desert City. A few naked children were playing before the huts of the natives. It was in toto a decidedly wretched sight.

The man who conducted me stood still. "You will want to bathe, mister. There is time. The chief expects you in three quarters of an hour."

I had to question this man, though I did not want to. Probably it was the effect of the long trip, the tense waiting, and now this desolate scene. "Does Mr. Schmidt live near here?"

"The chief lives five kilometers away. It is hardly two minutes by electric railway."

I couldn't see anything of an electric railway. "Has Mr. Schmidt been here long?" I asked.

"The chief bought this territory from the Australian government a year ago."

"Bought?" I could not understand why anyone should buy this dreary desert.

But the man replied with perfect naturalness, "About half a million square kilometers*."

"Half a million square kilometers? And is all the land like this here?"

The man, apparently a half-breed but certainly an educated person, smiled. "Oh no, unfortunately there is also considerable bad land in it."

I stared at him. Much bad land in it? Did this man then call the barren desert in which we were standing good land?

The Australian stepped back. "The chief doesn't like it," he said, "if there is much talking. But I felt that I ought to tell you a little by way of explanation. You still have half an hour. Would you like some breakfast?"

*About 193,000 square miles, equal in area to the States of Kansas and Colorado.

"No, I thank you, I ate in the plane."

"Then I should advise you to bathe and change your clothes. There are some ready for you there; we all wear a kind of uniform. Besides, your suit wouldn't do for this climate. At nine sharp, or rather at three minutes of nine, the electric car will come and fetch you. Please be ready, for the car waits only half a minute. Good morning, sir."

I stood alone, lost in thought. I looked out once more and saw nothing but this terrible desert, in some places absolutely bare—in others, overgrown with low, dusty, greyish shrubbery. I walked once around the house. The electric car was to fetch me at nine, but there were no car tracks to be seen here.

I went into the bathroom feeling decidedly depressed. I was very hot, and I felt that the sheet iron house was fairly cool—a fact I had not noticed before. The bath was fine, and it was a pity that I could not remain in it longer—but the mysterious car was due in seven minutes.

On the chair by the bath lay a suit and fresh linen. It was queer that the uniform included the linen too. There was fine light underwear, a new linen shirt, and a tropical suit, with a great Panama hat, all unmarked. It was not really a uniform. But from the heat prevailing outside even in the early morning I realized that my European clothes would have been torture to wear, and I had had no time at all to get anything anywhere. Once in the light clothes, after my bath, I felt much better. I put my suit and my linen in my suit-case and stepped outside. It was just about two minutes of nine. Nobody was near, and there was no sign of a vehicle. Then a long drawn-out shrill whistle sounded right before me, a great trap-door which I thought to be a plank floor opened out on both sides, and out of the earth rose a little car, that seemed a cross between an elevator and an electric car. At once a door opened automatically and at the same time, though nobody was to be seen, a loud voice called out in English, "Get in, quickly, please!"

I obeyed the call and got into the car, looking vainly for any other occupant. After exactly half a minute the door shut, the car lit up, and then seemed first to sink down and afterwards to roll sideways. I had my watch in my hand. At nine sharp the car stopped, the door opened, and the same voice from an invisible source called out, "Get out quickly, please!"

I stood doubtfully in an underground place. It was a large but not very high room, like a vestibule or lobby, with various doors around in a circle. It was bright, but I could not see the source of the light. There was absolute stillness, with nobody but myself in this case.

I had barely had time to make these observation when the strange voice sounded again. "The chief wants to see you."

The Chief Revealed!

AT the same time a light flashed brightly over one of the doors, leaving me no doubt that I was to enter there. All this seemed highly peculiar. I went up to the door and was about to knock when the door opened of itself, allowed me to enter, and silently closed again behind me.

I stood in another great room. This also had no windows but was perfectly bright, without any visible lighting. Yonder was a great desk, before which a man was sitting with his back to me. There were great cabinets all around the walls of the room. There was

no carpet on the floor, yet it was soft and elastic. Some chairs stood around the walls in front of the cabinets. On the surface of the desk were many buttons, like those of electric lights, and in the wall opposite the desk a great sheet of frosted glas was inserted.

Hardly had I advanced a step, when the same voice said loudly, "A visitor."

The gentleman at the desk looked up, but not at me. He was looking at the frosted glass in the wall. Now I plainly saw my image in the glass, which was therefore a mirror. But it was remarkable to have a mirror of ground glass! The man stood up and turned around.

"Good morning, my dear young man," said he.

I looked into the man's thin, quite energetic face. He had a sharply-cut head with bushy grey hair growing straight up, like a brush. He had bushy eyebrows, very vivid eyes, a face lined with many wrinkles. His age was hard to guess, but his figure was young, vigorous and elastic.

I was prepared for almost anything, but not for this salutation, "Good morning, my dear young man." It was certainly a strange mode of address from a chief to a strange young man.

Mr. Schmidt looked at me. There was a slight smile about his eyes and mouth. He said, "Well, take a seat."

The familiarity which he used as a matter of course I did not like, but I looked around for one of the chairs. Mr. Schmidt pressed a button, and the chair rolled out automatically and stopped beside the desk. I sat down. It was a comfortable chair, and as I sat there, the back automatically moved forward a bit, so that it lay right against my back. Mr. Schmidt looked at me quietly and gave me time to look at him. I must admit that although I was somewhat ill at ease, I yet felt attracted to this face. I felt as though I had seen it before somewhere, but of course that was not possible. Indeed, everything was impossible: the way I was hired, my trip, my arrival, and this man here.

Again I had the feeling that all this was only a dream, and I simply did not know whether I should desire to wake up or to dream on. Suddenly Mr. Schmidt said, "No, Fritz, you are not dreaming."

I started with amazement. It was not merely that he knew my first name, but how could he guess that I thought I was dreaming?

He went on. "Then you really don't recognize me? It is certainly too bad when a young man doesn't know the only brother of his deceased father."

I stared at him and jumped up. Quite right, I now knew where I had seen this face! When I was still a child, this man had once spent an hour in our home and had then departed again.

As I jumped up, there was a slight noise below me, and my chair was rolling back again to its place by the cabinet. The man who called himself my uncle again pressed the button, and the chair returned again.

He said with a smile, "In my office a person may not arise until the conversation is over. My electric servants are very diligent and dependable, but as yet they don't know the art of mind reading—"

He smiled rather significantly and continued, "—although they are very important and indispensable servants, just the same."

I sat down again, and he went on: "Certainly, my boy, I am your uncle Heinrich, your father's only brother, even if no one ever claimed to know anything about me. I was a bad boy in my youth. I did not do well, and I can't blame them for sending me to America. But America is a good school, a kind of survival of the fittest. Those who amount to nothing fall under the wheels, and whoever gets along becomes somebody. I became somebody. I had hard schooling, and I am now someone. But I was too proud to go back there again. I am also different. You father was a splendid man, and a man who went the right course.

"Your father is dead and your mother also. You must not think, because I never sent word of myself, that I did not know about you. I was often sick at heart at being so lonely.

"Now you are alone. I thought, if he is a good fellow, why should I leave my money to strangers? That is why I sent for you."

The Three Servants

I WAS going to reply, but he again stopped me. "I know already what you are going to say. Why didn't I write a letter like other people, why didn't I say I was your uncle?

"That is very simple. Had I done so, you would of course have run straight to your guardian, and the same man who has now put you out would—Well, we won't say any more about that. I have to be grateful to him, because if he had not been so harsh, a seventh of Australia would not belong to me to-day."

I was going to interject, "A desert!" but he stopped me with a gesture. "More of that anon," he said, "let me finish. You needn't imagine that I think you a genius. You really have little to do with the advertisement. I hope that Mr. Allister will stir up plenty of geniuses, for I can use some more good workers. Besides that, however, he was charged with the errand of learning about you, questioning your teachers, making inquiries at the factories where you worked, and then—"

He laughed, and his face now looked very pleasant. "I just wanted to see whether you had courage and enterprise! Anybody can travel to his uncle, but to fly out into the unknown right across the world to meet an uncertain future, relying on one's own self and one's own powers—well, not everyone can do that!

"In that at least you seem to be blood of my blood, and I hope you are that in other things as well. As to the planes, Mr. Allister went to Germany in them, and whether you were in them or they came back empty didn't matter."

"Uncle!" I was just about to jump up, when I heard the noise under the chair. I threw myself back, but it was too late. The chair and I sped across the room back into a corner.

My uncle laughed again and pressed the button. Back I came.

"Yes, yes, my boy, everything must be learned. And now to business. You have received a contract. If you prove useful, it will be kept. I have heard only good of you. You can become my right hand."

"But—"

"No, my boy, my name is not Schmidt. How could I be named Schmidt, when I am your father's brother. I just took the name when I wanted to disappear. Schmidt is really not a name but a generic idea. I knew a fellow once who called himself Nobody. He proved to the world that this Nobody could be a right diligent Somebody. I think I shall prove to the world that this Schmidt is a smith who is welding together something remarkable."

At the same time he had stood up, and his face again

had a strangely fanatical and energetic expression. Involuntarily I jumped up again, too, and the chair whizzed away, but my uncle said, "That's all right. Let the chair be. It's connected with what I'm going to explain to you. I don't need it with you any more. You'll find much here that is remarkable, but be assured that I'm no magician. There are no supernatural things on earth, yet I have learned to make many things useful to me, and perhaps in technical matters I am a few decades ahead of the world. Did you ever hear of Professor Wenzel Aporius?"

"No, I never did."

"He was my teacher."

He stepped before me and put his hands on my shoulders. Again he had his good-natured smile. "Now you don't know, my boy, whether I am a magician or a lunatic. Now you are racking your brain as to what I intend here. You have heard that I have bought a half million square kilometers of desert. That is correct. And you don't understand it."

"Certainly I don't, uncle."

"I'm going to tell you that we two—*we two*, do you hear, if we find no other co-workers—will in ten years or less make of this desert the most fruitful land on earth!"

The fanatical gleam was again in his eyes, and I said, "Can human hands do that?"

"No, my boy, human beings cannot, very certainly, but my three servants can."

Again I looked at him. Was the man after all insane? "Your three servants?" I asked.

"Do you know the names of my three servants? The first is called technology, the second electricity, and the third is a very fantastic fellow by the name of radium. With these three, plus the power of such a sun as stands in these heavens and the riches concealed in this decayed and dried up desert soil, you will see what wonders we shall accomplish.

"The first servant you have already met, or rather the first two. You saw how punctually my automatic railroad works, and you heard how well the phonograph replaces a servant to announce visitors. Perhaps you don't even yet know that you travelled the last three thousand kilometers, from Kroe hither, with no pilot in the plane, because I directed the machine from here by means of the Rindell-Matthews rays.

"I couldn't do this the entire way from Germany. My power plant doesn't work so far as that, though I believe that I now possess about the greatest plant in the world."

"And uncle—this cave?"

"I didn't make it. Fortunately nature put it at my disposal, for at present it's too hot up above, and at best only an Australian black can live in a sheet iron hut."

CHAPTER IV

An Important Visitor

HE took me by the arm, and we went up to the door. When we were about two steps from it, the door opened of itself. I had observed that it had no latch.

"It's very simple. When one comes two paces from the door, one's foot makes a contact. If someone comes from without, the phonograph announces him, and I can see his image in that frosted glass, which pressing a button changes into a mirror."

"And if a stranger comes?"

"Lad, I am still at the beginning. Of course there are guards up above, even if I do make provision to be seldom disturbed by them. A time will come when we can dispense with them entirely. There is absolutely no need of them.

"You know that it's possible by means of selenium cells to change the spoken word into writing, that is, to build a machine into which you speak and which converts your speech into a sort of typewriting.

"Why not, then, the reverse? Why not an arm which reaches out to the stranger, a phonograph voice which requests his visiting card? Then the hand disappears, puts the card into the apparatus with the selenium cells, changes writing to speech, and while the car is coming along underground, the phonograph is already announcing the name."

"Is that possible?"

"Everything is possible. The greatest problem is an economic one, and for the present the Australian lads are cheaper than the machines."

We were just about to cross the threshold, when a loud whistle sounded, the same that I had heard when the car fetched me into the world below. My uncle—I was convinced that he was actually that, especially as, despite his difference, he reminded me very much of my father—looked at the clock.

"The devil! A person thinks he's a regular machine, and then a lad like you disturbs his regular course. There is still more German sentiment in me than I thought. On your account I forgot Lord Albernoon's visit."

"I will—"

"You may just remain. You are to become my co-worker. It will do no harm. Sit down over there."

At a pressure which moved some lever, a folding table came out of one of the cabinets in the wall. This table had served as the door of the cabinet. It took its place by the wall; in the top a board arose, uncovering a typewriter, and this board now stood up like a desk. The interior was well filled with letter paper and envelopes.

"These are all playthings, trifles that I thought out when I was still working in the great shop of Professor Aporius, but I made my money with them. We'll talk more of that later. Do you write shorthand?"

"Yes, uncle."

"Then it will be as well for you to take down the conversation. My apparatus for recording speech is not yet quite ready."

"Lord Albernoon wishes to see you." This time it was a human voice, an Australian servant dressed in a kind of tropical uniform. Certainly "Mr. Schmidt" knew that the English lord was accustomed to certain things. And so the servant rolled out the chair, brought cigars and cigarettes, and placed whiskey, soda, and ice on the table, after which he vanished.

"Welcome, your lordship. You come from Canberra; was the trip comfortable?"

"Your airplane was excellent, Mr. Schmidt."

"Did you bring the agreement?"

"The government has ratified it, though the vote was divided."

He gave my uncle a document, and the latter read it aloud in several places, nodding his head.

"For the present half a million square kilometers, the survey being made in common. Price per square kilometer, one hundred pounds: a total of fifty million pounds sterling. Payable in fifty installments of a million pounds each within fifty years: a million pounds annually, on April first."

My uncle read these immense sums—fifty million

pounds sterling meant a thousand million marks*—in an indifferent voice, as if the amounts were trifling.

"If the purchaser should desire to pay more quickly, the amount is to be adjusted according to the interest thus saved. If the purchaser defaults in one payment, the land and all improvements and additions are to revert, without compensation, to the government of Australia."

My uncle looked at his lordship. "The terms are hard, are they not?"

"The Australian government will be justified—"

"Is the agreement signed?"

"It goes into effect the moment I receive the first payment of a million."

A Great Transaction

MY uncle took a check-book from his pocket. If I still had any doubts of him—if he had still seemed a bit fantastic—my respect for him now grew enormously. When I saw him very calmly write out the check and watch the signing of the agreement, and when Lord Albernoon took the check and read, "A million—the Australian National Bank of Canberra—All right, the agreement is in force!"

His lordship must, then, have known that my uncle was good for this sum! The latter arose and held out his hand to Albernoon. There was something like joyous excitement in his voice now.

"Then I am lord of this land! It is my property, my lord—to do with as I wish. I can act with it as I desire—"

"Provided it is not to the injury of the Australian continent."

"My lord, let us shake hands. I believe that in less than ten years I shall have paid off the rest of the sum."

I saw that the peer seemed incredulous, that he hid a smile, that he evidently thought my uncle mad, but he said in a businesslike tone, "You yourself proposed this agreement. I feel it my duty to remind you that you were in no way coerced and that the Australian government made you no promises—"

"That I was buying anything but a desert. Quite correct! And now, sir, I am sorry that I am not able to offer you a comfortable hotel—"

"If you will permit it, I will fly right back to Canberra."

"Quite as your lordship desires."

The lord carefully folded the check. "I hope that you will not regret—"

My uncle smiled again. "I hope that you and your government will not, either."

He accompanied the peer, who had taken no notice of me, to the car. I saw that it was not empty, but that two Australian soldiers in uniform were waiting in it. The servant opened the door, his lordship got in, there was a whistle, and again the car went rolling along the oblique track.

My uncle looked after it, gave a short laugh and rubbed his hands. He was evidently extremely pleased. Then he turned to me.

"Do you know what I am now?"

I did not reply.

"I might now call myself the Emperor of Australia! In ten years the Britishers will be cursing this government." He laughed again. "It is nevertheless a pity that his lordship was not wearing my uniform, like you. A fine comedy could have been made out of this conversation, and you would have laughed heartily."

Again I did not understand, but I did not want to ask. My uncle stepped over to me and looked me in the eye. "Do you believe in me?" he asked.

It was a hard question, and I saw doubt in his face. Without waiting for my answer, he arose. "Come," said he.

We now went over the threshold. My uncle stopped and again pressed a button. "A person should not exert himself any more than is necessary."

To the Power Plant

HE put his arm on my shoulder, and we glided forward. In the passageway, which now branched off from the oblique line of tracks, a moving floor was let in, an endless belt, which carried us along with it like the belts I had seen in warehouses at home.

All this again had an unreal air. The passage was dark, but as we glided forward, it became bright about us. "Be careful," said my uncle: "here we are going to leave the belt."

We stepped off; at the same moment a door opened, and we were surrounded by a deafening noise. We were standing in a very high grotto. Evidently a very extensive system of caves was in use here. We were looking into an electric power station of immense extent. Gigantic fly-wheels were humming, mighty turbines were revolving their driving-wheels, and one wall was covered with marble slabs, in which a system of levers was set. During my practical education with the personnel of the Siemens plant, I had spent six months at the great Rummelsburg power plant near Berlin. Here I saw it duplicated, only on a still larger scale. But one thing was odd: we saw only one single man, apparently an American, controlling the whole mechanism. He was sitting in a chair, looking sharply about. He did not have dirty hands. Instead there was before him only a level switchboard with many buttons and levers.

"Is all well, Mr. Holborn?"

"All right!"

We returned to the moving belt. This time my uncle had to fix a system of dials before a door opened. We entered a small room, the walls of which were covered with a substance unknown to me. A great safe stood here, and this too had to be opened in a complicated fashion, before I saw a number of little boxes.

"Do you know what is in these boxes? My army!"

If only I had been able to overcome the impression that all this was a dream—or else—no, if my uncle was mad, the lord—

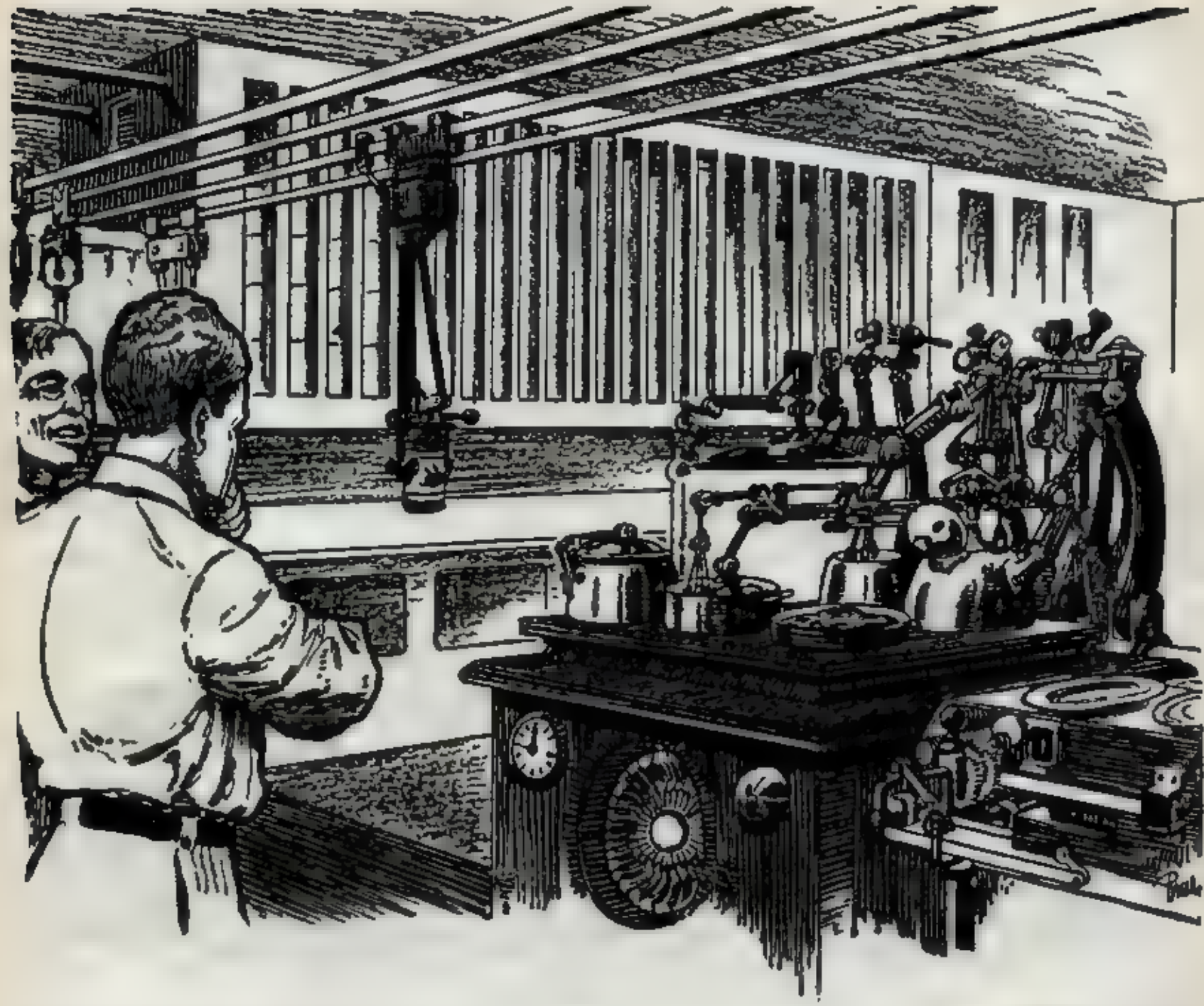
He locked the safe and said calmly, "Each of these boxes contains a quarter of a kilogram of radium. I have two hundred such boxes."

A Gigantic Plan

AGAIN we were sitting in my uncle's room. We sat silent for some time. There was a strange contradiction in this man. Flares of energy, almost fanatical activity, an iron will, when he was facing the lord—and then, again, moments of lassitude, moments in which weariness came over his face, when I almost pitied him. I wanted to jump up and embrace him, as I used to embrace my father, when he was ill.

We sat opposite each other in silence. My uncle's head was bowed, and he was looking straight before him. I looked at him and felt as though we were talking together, as though this strange man, whom people at home

*About $250,000,000.



(Illustration by Paul)

A shrill bell sounded and the whole kitchen seemed to come to life. "That is how the entire meal is prepared."

had spoken of only as an adventurer, were related to me, as though I were beginning to be fond of him.

This silent conversation, if I may call it so, might have lasted an hour. Then he raised his head and said, as though merely continuing a long talk, "Then you wish to work with me?"

I felt that I trusted him, that I had lost all doubts in some strange manner. "If you can use me," I replied.

He did not look at me, but held out his hand.

"I am no longer young. To-day I am older than your father lived to be. I am sixty. I have lived through six decades alone. Very often I should not have cared if it had been less. But now I have a responsibility. I have a work which is my child. I need help. If you are to be my co-worker, if perhaps someday you are to be my successor, I must explain. I have spoken more to-day than I have in weeks. It had to be. You must become acquainted, first with the work that I want to do, then with my life.

"I know, you thought I was mad. Everyone does, but I am not. You see a desert here, useless land, a step-child of Mother Earth. What is a desert? Why is this land desert? Because it lacks life; and life, for the desert, is water. Why does many a man remain inwardly a desert? Because water for him to swim in is lacking, because—but I was going to tell of my work.

"The earth is great, and yet small. Millions are crowded together where nature makes life easy for them, and yet they painfully struggle together for bread, instead of conquering what is to be conquered.

"Bring water into the desert, traverse it with canals: the earth becomes fruitful. Release the precious chemicals here in the decomposed rock, which has been lying fallow for tens of thousands of years: they will become precious loam. Use the fruitfulness of the tropical sun—and here, where there is nothing but a barren waste, blooming gardens and fields will arise.

"You cannot do it? Human hands cannot? You are right. The intense heat of the tropics weakens muscles that are not of iron. That was the great teaching of my master Aporius.

"But take machines where men fail. You saw that power plant down there? I built it six months ago. A single man can control it, and it gives me the power to draw over the sea to men even the plane in which you came!

"What feeds the power plant? A subterranean river! And so this land was not always a desert. Do you

know that it has now been discovered that even under the great Sahara there is a subterranean water supply, an entire system of rivers and lakes? Do you know that wells have been bored in which animals were found, little water creatures, originating far away, and brought there by these subterranean streams?

"There is such a river here, too. Perhaps you know that in the east of the desert that I bought there are mountains. They are high mountains, with vigorous trees. It is from these mountains that the river comes. It filled almost the whole of these caves when I found it. Now it is under control. It runs into my turbines and feeds them, and has to surrender its violent power, to provide me with the electric current which is the heart of my work.

"Now for the plan. Even if I succeeded in turning this desert into fruitful soil, where would the people come from to cultivate it? We are in the tropics, where the white man cannot work."

My uncle stopped and rose. "Come with me!"

We entered another room nearby. As soon as we entered, the light shone here too. In the centre of this room stood a circular table with a sheet of glass upon it. Under this glass was what appeared to be a remarkable toy. About ten centimeters below the glass sheet there was another sheet, but this one was not of glass. It was yellow like sand and was traversed by a network of miniature rails. All these rails united in the centre at one point, and on them were tiny plows and planting machines. There were remarkable machines with long knives stretching out from them, and others with great boxes. It seemed as though someone had here imitated all the agricultural apparatus in miniature for a child.

My uncle pressed a switch. The picture came to life. The tiny plows glided over the rails. They seemed to loosen the earth. The blades were cutting up the ground. The planting machines automatically followed the plows, casting the seed. Behind them came the dark boxes, spraying water in all directions. Then all the apparatus came back to the centre. My uncle pressed another lever; the rails now moved a little to one side, and the same process was repeated in a new place.

A Mountain of Radium

"THIS is the legacy of the inventor Wenzel Aporius. That is what I intend to carry out. Why cannot we perform on a great open expanse what takes place here on a small scale? Imagine a network of such rails with the machines on it, and think further. You have seen clockwork and you understand electricity. Imagine a clockwork set not for hours but for months and days. For instance, the first of February comes. A contact is automatically made, and the plows are set in motion to break up the ground. On the next day, the planters follow; on the third, the sprinklers. . . .

"One single power plant, located in the center of the network, like a spider in its web, automatically sends out all these machines. The man is only the overseer who watches over all these iron workers, not the worker himself.

"Imagine such spider webs spread over all the land which I have bought. Imagine canals changing the desert into fruitful land; picture the ground tunneled by mines which unearth treasures, and imagine industrial cities in which machines work for men. From this desert will go forth prosperity. The air will be full of mighty airships carrying in cooled rooms to all the world the precious fruits and vegetables we shall produce. These airships will be directed by ourselves. Imagine that later on in the same way all those parts of the earth will be made fruitful which are now lying useless as deserts or covered by the impenetrable primeval forest. Want will disappear, and with it the struggle for existence. This earth will enter a new era. War will vanish from the earth, for what are wars but the struggle of nations for food? It will be an age of joy and peace—"

In rapt silence he gazed on the vista that opened up before his eyes. I looked at the little clockwork, and saw how the year passed before me, just like the course of the stars in a planetarium. I saw ever-changing machines, little harvesters loaded with fruits and corn.

The immensity of the idea made me dizzy. "And you are going to execute this?"

"I shall make the start. I know that it can be done! Who will complete it? Only he who has the same faith, the same vision."

"It will cost millions."

He shook his head. "Billions, my son."

"And—"

"Perhaps I have them."

"You?"

"Perhaps they are buried in the depths of Mt. Russell."

Reminiscences

"OF course you don't know this mountain," he went on. "It is in the Australian desert. It was there I found the radium."

"The radium?"

"In this world all is chance. Do you know how diamonds were discovered in South Africa? A poor struggling farmer went out on a trek with his ox-cart to find some fertile land. The rainy season surprised him, and he built a poor hut.

"The ground became soft mud, his animals died, and he himself was starving, when one day his eye fell on some strangely glittering little pebbles which had seemingly got stuck in the mud. They were scattered all through the muddy crust on his wagon, which had dried in the sun, and they were in the mud walls of his hut."

Again my uncle was lost in thought and stood silent for a while. "Those were the first diamonds, observed before anyone was yet tunnelling in the earth for them, and the farmer became a rich man.

"I was young at the time, as you are now. I was full of wild dreams. I had a tremendous urge in me, but I had no place to live my life. I had no definite aim, and I kicked over the traces.

"One gloomy day I came to the great Aporius. He is dead. He died mad, the victim of his genius. I shall tell you of that later.

"Greedily I drank in his ideas; then I lost sight of him. I have been all over the world. I went to Alaska in the gold rush. I worked in the diamond mines in Kimberley. Then I was an engineer and earned my living by hard, grueling labor, with small returns.

"Ten years ago I came to Australia. Life in the bush! You will learn it. A life of wretchedness, nevertheless—

"I was a hunter of birds of paradise. For weeks I wandered about in the wild mountains. I lived with the wild natives. So I came to Mt. Russell."

A signal sounded, the note of a bell, and my uncle nodded.

"Once more machines are cleverer than we. Still, it took a human mind to start these machines and to con-

trol them. It is noon, and probably you have not eaten since you have been here. Come, we won't keep the good machine waiting."

He arose. Now I knew why I felt weak. My uncle looked at me.

"You have passed your examination. You are of my blood. I have not erred, or rather Frank Allister has been right again."

"An examination? But I didn't say anything!"

"You'll understand that when you know the secret of the chair. I don't want to confuse you too much now."

Again a bell sounded. Now the ground glass plate over the desk lit up, and an English sentence appeared. "Returning with twelve German engineers. Send planes. Allister."

My uncle, "Mr. Schmidt," manipulated a telegraphic key. He seemed very well pleased. "Now things are going to happen. Allister knows whom he is selecting. I had to have Germans. But now let's have dinner."

We entered a neighboring room, a smaller grotto, in which was a table already set. He poured wine into the glasses, wonderfully cooled Rhine wine, and smiled.

"You know, I am the big spider. I have you in my web! But you'll never regret it. And now, forget the work for a while. The great physician Hufeland says that eating does the most good when people are enjoying themselves.

"Here's to Germany! To our dear native land! You'll see that I am not such a bad German as many think."

He drank the toast. Then we had a good nourishing meal. I no longer wondered that no living servant waited on us, but that pushing a lever automatically brought the food on little tables from an opening in the wall or took it away again.

Then my uncle led me to a larger room which was comfortably fitted out. The walls were covered with hangings, there was a couch, and a table with books on it.

"I shall send for you when I need you. Just think things over now."

He went out of the room, and I was alone.

CHAPTER V

Was It a Dream?

"THIS is Berlin broadcasting on a three hundred and thirty-meter wavelength! Professor Windmüller will now lecture on Australia, the land of the future. All right, Professor!"

"Ladies and gentlemen! Australia—"

I started up. It was dark about me. I listened sorrowfully to the words that came to my ear. Then I had been dreaming after all, dreaming about the airplane trip, the figure of my uncle, the strange work of Wenzel Aporius! I had been in Berlin all the time. I had been sleeping, seemingly sleeping all day.

I tried to think things out. Yesterday evening? Was it yesterday? It was so long ago. My trip came in between—no, I had dreamed that. But then, that heavy session with my friends, was that a dream? Where was I? There must be a loud speaker somewhere—

"If we next consider the Australian desert, which stretches in its unproductive wastes from about Mt. Russell on the west—"

"Mt. Russell"—what did I know about Mt. Russell? Oh, that was where the radium had been found!

I jumped up. Then the room became bright. Not all at once, but gradually a luminosity shone half way up the room, becoming stronger and stronger, until everything was completely lighted.

I was not in Berlin. I was in the room to which my uncle had brought me, in this disguised cave. I was lying on the couch, carefully wrapped in a coverlet, and above me a loud speaker hung from the ceiling. It was a round wooden box, such as I had seen in pictures of American sets, but now it was silent.

Marvellous! I was glad to be here. I was glad, yet I had a little homesickness for Berlin. I scanned the walls carefully. It was indeed remarkable. One spot of the wall was brightly lighted by a beam. There were no electric lights as I knew them, to brighten the grotto. There was a glow strange to me—a pleasant brightness like that of day.

Now a sunbeam, if I may call it so, rested on one spot in the wall, and as I looked at it and stepped up to within about two paces, a little door opened, a washbasin came down, and cold water flowed into the basin from a spigot.

After washing I felt splendidly refreshed. I tried to think things over. I felt restless and desirous of seeing my uncle, of hearing more of his wonders. I felt afraid that these wonders would disappear.

The loud speaker commenced again. This time it was the voice of my uncle. "If you are awake, come to me."

I slipped on my coat, stepped to the door, which opened for me, and went along the passage. A glow running along the wall served to guide me. Then I came to the place to which the car had brought me. It was standing there ready.

The door of my uncle's room opened, and he seemed waiting for me, but he was not alone. The American who had previously been watching the great power plant was now with him. In the centre of the room stood a supper table set for three.

"You had a good sleep!"

"Pardon me, uncle, I—"

"Perfectly all right. It's a sign of healthy nerves. You look rested now. There were all sorts of new impressions—"

"I heard the radio and woke up."

"Mr. Holborn—you know him from this morning—tuned in on Berlin for you at my request!"

"I was so startled. I was afraid I had been dreaming!"

"Were you *really afraid?*"

"Uncle—!"

"In five minutes a plane is leaving for Germany. Do you want to go on it?" he asked, smilingly.

"May I not remain?"

He looked at me and nodded. "I was fooling. The plane isn't for you, and it isn't going to Germany but to San Francisco. I have to go there. It's not a bad trip, only about as far as Berlin but I'm going to make quick time. I hope to be back in eight days.

"I think, if you are seriously determined on remaining here, that Mr. Holborn, my second in command, will have the kindness to initiate you into things. He'll tell you a lot more, and in fact show you what you need to know.

"When I come back, I believe Mr. Allister will also be here with the twelve gentlemen. The real work will commence then. It's high time, for the most important things must be got out of the way before those clever gentlemen in Canberra wake up to their folly in signing the agreement with me. Now for a quick cup of coffee."

My uncle seated himself comfortably. There was

nothing in his manner to show that in eight days he was going to fly twenty-six thousand kilometers. We drank the excellent coffee.

Then he got up.

"Good-bye, Holborn. Fritz, come with me to the car." For a moment we stood alone together. "Then, you do want to stay?"

"Yes, I do!"

"Very well. On my return you will tell me in which department you wish to work. My boy, if you live up to the good impression you have made on me—"

A whistle sounded, and my uncle laughed.

"See, once again the machine is my master! If I am not quick—"

He jumped into the car. At once the automatic door closed, and away the car sped and vanished in the shaft. A moment later I heard the trap-door opening above and walked back into the room. Mr. Holborn was sitting there with his legs stretched out, smoking a large cigar. He passed me one.

To Mt. Russell

"MR. SCHMIDT is the finest man in the world," he said, lazily.

"I believe it."

"But I *know* it. Old boy, you must be a lucky fellow to have such an uncle and to please him so well."

"Do I really please him?"

"He isn't a man to put himself out for people, and Desert City is no nursery. Many a one has been here and left again by plane after three hours. Right on the dot they went, literally, while you—"

"How long have you been with my uncle?"

"Since we shined shoes together in Sydney."

"Shined shoes?"

"Yes, sir, and it's a thoroughly honest job. I know all about it, but I like it better here. Do you feel in the mood to do things?"

"Surely."

"How about a little airplane ride this evening?"

I laughed. "To Frisco? Or have you the job of taking me over the frontier?"

Holborn suddenly became serious. "Mr. Schmidt never says anything he doesn't mean. He told me your contract was in effect."

"Where are we going?"

"To Mt. Russell, if you like."

"I should like nothing better."

"Old boy, you must be proud of this chance. Mt. Russell, the real Mt. Russell, is known thus far to only two people in the world: your uncle and myself."

The whistle that I now knew so well sounded. "There is the car already."

We went up again and again. I was surprised, for it was night! I must, then, have slept many hours! But it was no longer so hot. Before us was a plane, quite different from that in which I had come—a simple plane, without a cabin, designed for the pilot and a companion.

"Do you know how to control a plane?"

"Yes, indeed."

"I shall take it over, and then I need not explain the way." There was nobody in sight except ourselves. The plane rose and glided along fairly close to the ground.

"Is it far?" I asked eagerly.

"We shall be there in three hours, that is, at about midnight. Mt. Russell is part of our domain, the most important part."

Beneath us was the desert, then came dense bush; at times, though very rarely, there was a settlement in the bush. Then there might be a village with a bright fire in the square, with men and women dancing about it.

"Natives?" I asked.

"Cannibals," Holborn said indifferently.

"Pleasant neighbors!"

"At least they are intelligent. It also happens that they don't eat white men. They are too salty for them and taste of alcohol."

I could not help laughing.

"I hope that this is only hearsay."

"They told me themselves," Holborn said seriously. "Their chief is our friend. You will make his acquaintance."

Slowly the land below us rose and became mountainous. Densely-wooded places began to appear, and the moonbeams fell on valleys filled with splendid flowers.

"Are there many wild animals?"

"None at all. Just kangaroos and the like. They get tiresome to the palate in the long run. But, to make up for that, fish climb trees, and the frogs bark like dogs. A crazy land, this Australia. It is a bit of the primitive world handed down to modern man."

The plane descended to the earth. We had approached a group of most remarkable rock formations. There were mountains which looked like uniform cones of once molten silica, and which had the appearance of huge sugar-loaves or giant pieces of belemnite*.

"The glass mountains," Holborn pointed them out. "They can't be climbed. Still, at the same time—"

The plane descended and the wheels rolled over the ground. "Let's get out."

On the ground again, I looked around. A thick bush was about us. We walked along a path, a real path, which men had cut in this tropical wilderness. It was already starting to be overgrown.

"It was cut only yesterday. When the primeval forest engages him in battle, man is almost powerless."

After perhaps an hour had passed, the narrow mountain path opened out into a little hollow. "An extinct crater," said Holborn. It was a garden of heavenly beauty. Never had I dreamed of such floral splendor. But the flowers were without fragrance.

"Come, I have still better things to show you."

We climbed on, and presently we stood beside one of those steeply rising cones.

"Here is the mine."

"A mine?"

"Yes—one that Mr. Schmidt discovered. He found it by chance, while he was still going about the island as a hunter of birds of paradise. It is unlike any mine you have ever seen. I think it is about ten thousand years old."

Into the Mine!

I LOOKED at him, but he was perfectly serious.

"Ten thousand years," he repeated. "Mr. Schmidt thinks so, too. What do we know, we creatures who live but for a day and are so proud of our knowledge? What can we guess of what has been aeons before us? What do we know of the golden, fabled Atlantis? Only what Plato tells us from the old Egyptians. What do we know of the immense images on Easter Island? Only that they are there and that it was people of a great civilization who made them. They were certainly not people living on a little island in the ocean, but dwellers in a great land now submerged. What do we know about

*The pointed fossil shell of a cuttlefish.

the builders of the palace of Palenque, still standing today in Mexico on the banks of the Usumacinta, outlasting thousands of years? What do we know of the people who lived before the deluge covered the earth and swept them away? What will the people who inhabit the earth thousands of years after us know about us?"

The American had become serious and thoughtful. We were nearing a black hole which opened up in the wall of the mountain. Holborn pointed it out.

"Mr. Schmidt sought refuge in this when he was overtaken by a rainstorm. It almost cost him his life, but it was the beginning of his greatness."

We entered a rectangular chamber. During the entire trip Mr. Holborn had carried in his hand a rectangular box which I now learned was a great storage battery. He connected it with a wire, and threw a switch. A lamp lighted up.

"Now we can have light for two hours. This battery won't last longer than that."

I looked about me. The chamber was chiselled out of the rock, and its walls were decorated. There were great titanic faces pictured here, but none of them were reminiscent of the Australian race. Here and there were even blurred remains of painted pictures. Then again there were strange astronomical pictures like crowns above the stone faces; these were of gold and silver finely inlaid in the rock.

I could not help feeling that I was in a mysterious temple.

"Come here!"

Holborn had opened a chest which stood in the corner. It was certainly a new chest, roughly made of boards. He took out two suits of a material unknown to me.

"Put them on!"

"Why! They are almost like diving suits."

"You'll soon see why we need them."

I got into a suit. It was all in one piece and even covered my feet and hands. At the ends of the sleeves were gloves and in front of the face was a stiff mask with eye-pieces apparently cut from crystal. It was a very uncomfortable suit, but Holborn put on one just like it.

"Take the lantern," he said, giving me an electric flashlight. Then he commenced to climb down a ladder.

"The ladders are new but the shaft is extremely old. You see, it is cut from the living rock."

The shaft was perfectly rectangular, and its walls appeared to be polished. It was altogether wonderfully made. At regular intervals, the length of a ladder apart, it had a projection, big enough to permit us to change ladders. We climbed down five such ladders, and then found ourselves standing in a great room.

"We shall be at our destination in a moment."

We walked along a gallery. It, too, was perfectly preserved, because it was hewn in the solid rock. Soon I saw that the ground was dirty underfoot, and the walls were no longer of rock. Like the floor, they were formed of a dirty bluish black mass which felt like sticky clay.

It was uranium ore, pitchblende. I had often seen small samples of it when I was at school. Pitchblende! That was the substance from which the precious radium was obtained. Elsewhere the ore is quite rare, and found only in small amounts. But here there was such a profusion of it that a whole gallery had been worked right into the ore! Not by us—but thousands or ten thousands of years before us, by some mysterious forerunners of our race.

Here the gallery came to an end. After we had looked about for a while and I had taken a sample, as Holborn suggested, we made our way back. I felt a violent headache as we proceeded and had an inexplicable sick feeling all over. Holborn then took the piece of pitchblende from me and wrapped it in a piece of material like that of which our suits were made. Not until then did we take the suits off and climb up the shaft again to the outer world.

CHAPTER VI

A Sudden Fortune

I BREATHED more easily when I felt the cool night air on my brow. Holborn handed me a pill and took one himself. Then he showed me a fine spring from which we drank.

"Now you know the wealth of Mr. Schmidt. It is radium: pitchblende—from which radium can be obtained in incredible amounts, such as you saw there. Not grams or pounds of it—it can perhaps be measured by the hundreds of pounds! This amount of radium could revolutionize the entire world. It is well that nobody but Mr. Schmidt discovered it."

"How was it possible that it remained undiscovered so long?"

"It is seldom that white men come into these mountains. Besides, you yourself have already realized that a person cannot approach it in safety. The effect of such an amount of radium, due to the rays it emits, is certain death. The mountain and its caves, which to the Bushman of today are of course caves of the gods and devils, are known as 'caves of death.' Never has a native ventured in; or if perchance a rash one did, it meant certain death for him.

"Of course, it was just this legend that impelled our chief to go in. He, too, nearly fell a victim to the demons of the enchanted mountain. He discovered what the mountain contained, and he brought back a sample with him. It caused him severe wounds and festering sores in his hand, but it was to be the source of his wealth."

"But isn't it strange that the Australian government—"

"The government of course knows as little about the mine as anybody else," Holborn interrupted. "And so nothing has been changed. We simply planted this hedge of prickly pears which is safer than an iron door, because it allows nobody through. And who would want to get through? But you saw the splendid garden here, in between the wild crags and the primeval forest. Probably this is due to the effect of the radium on the depths of the mountain."

"But—radium in such quantities—it is incredible —"

Holborn nodded. "And these mountains with their bizarre forms are also a riddle. Probably millions of years ago these formations fell to earth as parts of another heavenly body, maybe a comet. And in this outside body, which seems to have been a sort of vitreous* flux, the pitchblende remained hidden, like a kernel in a nut. It was as if it were insulated by this covering. And thus it remained until our predecessors made their way to it for the first time, perhaps making great use of it, perhaps perishing from it like the present-day natives. However, I don't think they perished. Were this so, they would not have decorated the shaft so well nor the ante-room up above and dedicated them to the gods.

"Finding it was hard, and to get the stuff out was all but impossible, your uncle confided in me. We climbed down, after secretly cutting a path for ourselves through

* Resembling glass.

the prickly pears in the dead of night. We were always on guard against the local natives, because they said that any one who went into the demons' cave destroyed not only himself but the whole tribe. We took along a glass flask sewed up in asbestos. With wooden shovels we put a little of the pitchblende into it and fled again. We washed ourselves here at the spring in the precious radio-active water, and made our way to Sydney.

"There we sold our guns, our goods, everything we had, and in the cellar of a house we set up a very small laboratory. In this, Mr. Schmidt, in a manner that I do not myself understand, got the radium out of the pitchblende.

"We were poor devils. O, so poor! I at least had lost all faith in any fortune that was to blossom forth for me. So you can imagine how I felt when Mr. Schmidt showed me a little box and said, 'This is worth five thousand pounds, and half of it is yours!'

"But that did not mean luxury for us. It was better to toil and go hungry a while longer. So we went down again into the mine to work. We soon had so much radium it must have been worth about half a million pounds. We sewed the little boxes into our clothes and took jobs as firemen, for we did not want to show our treasure in Australia. Thus we worked our way to San Francisco. Even when we arrived there we were of course very cautious. There was still the danger that we should be taken for thieves or swindlers. Believe me, it was far from pleasant.

"We came back to Australia with a quarter of a million. Mr. Schmidt had meanwhile worked out his plan and revealed it to me. I was astounded and afraid! I was once an engineer and I am also one who has made headway under difficulties, but I am no genius like your uncle. If I had found the radium alone, I should probably have sold it in Sydney to the first comer, taken a seat in the nearest tavern, and drunk until all my money was gone. Then I should have repeated the performance, keeping it up until I was dead."

Holborn was gazing ahead rather gloomily. We were still sitting by the radium spring and eating a lunch which he had brought along in the plane.

"Then you are part-owner, Mr. Holborn?"

He looked at me in surprise. "Absolutely not! What did I have to do with your uncle's discovery of the mine? I have helped him and he has paid me. Today he is paying very well, too, and I am glad to continue to help him as well as I can."

I pressed his hand warmly. "How fortunate that my uncle found a man like you!"

"Why so? Because I have not killed him? It's all very simple to explain. First, not every person is a murderer. Second, I am fond of him, and I was already fond of him as a good comrade, when we two came half-starved to Sydney. The ship in which he was first engineer and I was fireman was wrecked, and nobody in Sydney would do anything for us. Absolutely nothing for the German, and not a bit more for the American.

"It was a tough time, Heaven knows, shining shoes until we had got together enough money to buy two guns and go out into the bush. And then—two years later we had found the radium mine."

"And what happened after that, or am I too inquisitive in asking you?"

"Mr. Schmidt asked me to tell you. He himself does not like to talk. Yesterday I was surprised at his conversation, for I don't think he had said so much in the whole preceding year!"

A Fool's Paradise

MR. HOLBORN laughed loudly. "It was a rare state of affairs after we had our quarter of a million. We came back to Australia. This time we lived in the Victoria Hotel, then the best hotel in town. The next morning we went straight to the government headquarters. There was then no capital city Canberra. I can still see the face of the commissioner, when Mr. Schmidt presented himself. Your uncle was dressed in very fine clothes, which hardly went with his weather-beaten face. He looked like a dyspeptic American, the kind you see in the comic papers. He began:

"'Excuse me, I want to buy some land.'

"'Where?'

"'A vitreous mountain, in the middle of the desert.'

"'What do you want of it?'

"'I want to build a country house on it.'

"'Out in the desert?'

"'Yes, on the vitreous mountain.'

"'There's a number of them; which one may it be?'

"'I want to buy Mt. Russell.'

"The commissioner laughed a long time. 'Just that one? Do you know what sort of savages live there?'

"Mr. Schmidt nodded. 'Yes, they are cannibals.'

"'And what do you wish to pay for Mt. Russell?'

"'I offer you twenty thousand pounds.'

"It was a few days before the agreement was complete. The Australian government must have laughed heartily at the stupid American whom they did not know to be a German. They took the twenty thousand pounds, and Mt. Russell came into the possession of your uncle. The agreement was well drawn, but the officials probably laughed mockingly when your uncle inserted a clause stating that the mountain belonged to him, with everything on it and it, together with a hundred kilometers around, likewise the air over the mountain and all the ground under it.

"Again we fetched out some of the precious stuff. We spent nearly a year in America selling it, for even then your uncle wished to keep the secret. Then we came back to Australia, this time carefully investigating the possibilities of the desert. That was, so to speak, the beginning of your uncle's great dream. We spent two years in investigations. Then we found the great cavern in which we now live. We discovered the subterranean river, which we believe to be the overflow of the De Grey river. And now your uncle has bought this desert region with the cave from the government. They laughed at him when he came, but they took his money. Now we can go to work.

"Six months later an entire shipload of turbines, giant dynamos, and all the rest was in Cambridge Gulf.

"During the two years we had spent in the bush we had made friends with the savages. It was simple enough. Nearly all are like harmless children. To be sure, you cannot whip them or murder their wives and children or chase them from their villages, the way the whites used to do when they came to Australia. Well, it was white criminals that the English government sent to Australia, and any one who is a thief and murderer at home is ill suited to making savages friendly with white men.

"We managed it, however. I don't mean 'we,' but only your uncle. I only helped him.

"Then the heavy machinery was taken over the desert by a railroad which we laid and afterwards took away again.

"Yes, sir, we already had ten years' work in Australia behind us, before we could erect this power plant, before

the chief worked out his great plan, before we slowly and carefully sold so much radium that millions of pounds sterling were in banks at our disposal, and before the Australian government in Canberra was ready to sell this vast territory. Of course they are still convinced that it is all nonsense; but a million a year from his wretched desert is to them a million clear profit, and they don't look a gift horse in the mouth."

I looked at the American. "Do you believe that it will be successful?"

Holborn nodded and said calmly, "If Mr. Schmidt were to tell me today that in a month he would bring the moon down to the earth, I am sure that he would do it. The chief says nothing he cannot do."

He stood up. "Well! I think we had better go home. The sun is about to rise, and I must look at the power plant."

Leisurely we got into the plane again. The sun was rising, a very strange sight. At first, far back over the plateau, a dark spot, and then a disk with a silvery light, rose upward, while the sky was all tinted with gay colors.

"How many people are living in Desert City now?" I asked when we were comfortably settled.

"At present, four white men; five, if you count Mr. Schmidt, but he is not here now. Besides him there are you, I, and two servants."

I laughed. "Is that the total population of the city?"

"That is the ruling class," he said seriously. "Besides that, there are the workers. They are not numerous, but they are very strong."

"White workers?"

They are mostly black, some are red, but all are strong. Strong, dependable, absolutely obedient if properly treated, and tireless. These workers are our machines—the turbines—the turbines, the dynamos, the great driving wheels and transmission systems. The best of them is the subterranean river which gives its power to drive all our machines."

"And only four persons are here to tend these machines?"

"*No, I am the only one* who tends the machines. If I need help, Mr. Schmidt aids me. The other two are simply servants. They would not be needed, except that visitors frequently come, like the English peer yesterday, who think there should be human servants. Before we sent home the two hundred American mechanics who built the power plant under your uncle's supervision, we had them fix up the cavern we live in and equip it with everything which now makes for our comfort."

"Why send away the workers, if my uncle is about to bring his plans to realization?"

"It is not well to have too many who know what you know. We had sought out these mechanics from all America, five to a city. They were not too curious about things here. They, like the government in Canberra, thought it was all a wild idea, and by now they have probably forgotten all about it. Now nobody need know how it all originated, and I can tend the power plant all alone."

There was a silence.

"In Australia everything is different," he said finally, pointing to the sky. "Here the sun rises and sets not golden but silver. That is due to the mist."

A Marvelous Toy

CLOSE beside us there now sounded twice and thrice the sharp crack of a whip and the clucking sound made by a driver urging on his horses. Involuntarily I started and grasped the hand of Holborn, who was about to start the motor.

"A wagon! How is it possible for a wagon to be coming here now?"

The American shook his head. "Absolutely impossible."

"But listen!"

Again there sounded, now very close to us, the sharp cracking of the whip and the clucking noise.

I was really very much startled, but Mr. Holborn pointed to a pretty little bird sitting boldly on a branch right before us. It opened its bill, and lo! the sharp cracking of the whip and the clucking came from the little bird's throat! I started again, when I plainly heard nearby a loud mocking laugh. Mr. Holborn joined in this laugh.

"There are no people laughing. Those are the laughing jackasses, as the popular name is. See, up there, the black flock in the branches. Truly, they are the cleverest of birds, for I have found that they always laugh at people who have done something foolish or have been in some way befooled. Yes, yes, dear friend, you must get used to finding all things in Australia different from elsewhere in the world."

He started the motor, and while the first rays of morning were shining over the garden of Paradise and the forest which surrounded the foot of the vitreous mountain, our own artificial bird winged its way up into the air and soared over the desert toward our cavern.

* * *

That morning we went through the entire system of caves, and I had a chance to admire this gigantic power station in all its details. One power station is after all much like another, only this one differed in being completely arranged for automatic control. Even a little natural oil pool was taken advantage of: through ingenious dropping devices it continuously let its drops fall on the wheels and joints of the machinery. Mr. Holborn had also taken me into a distant room in which there was a tremendous rushing noise. There the current of water hitherto confined rushed with all its original violence from its stone pipe and vanished in a seemingly endless abyss.

We also went to the kitchen. One of the servants was here, but he had nothing to do but watch things. Mr. Holborn nodded and smiled, saying, "Here is the first experiment in trying out the clockwork system, which will someday become the very heart of the whole land, so to speak."

The kitchen was in a great cave with smoothly polished walls. In the centre stood an electric hearth. Above it, all around, containers were fastened to the wall, and each of these had a long arm with a spout-like opening. Everything was quiet, and the servant was sitting there indifferently, smoking a cigarette.

Mr. Holborn took out his watch with a smile. "It is a quarter of twelve. Do you want to see how our lunch is prepared?"

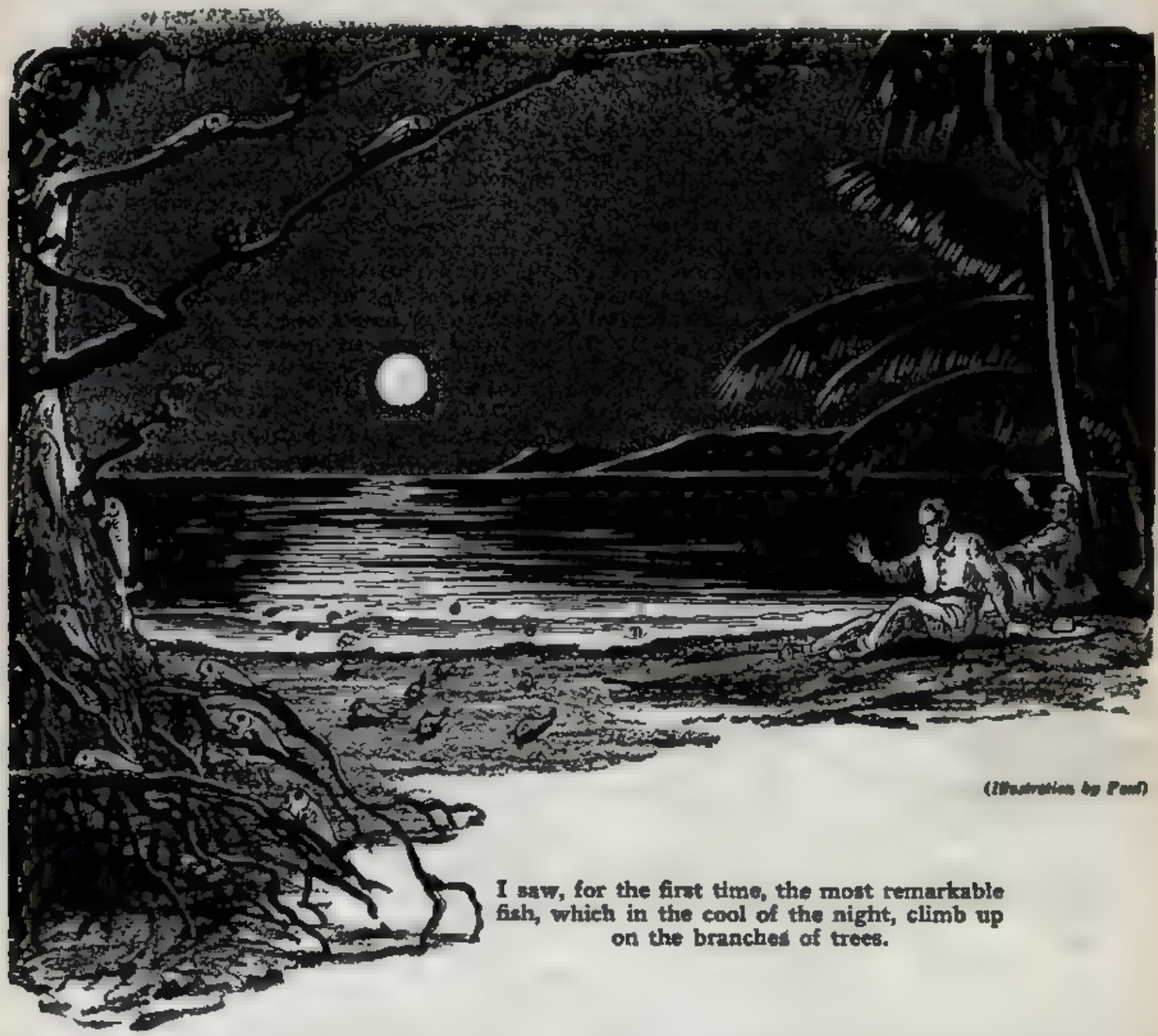
"With pleasure."

There was a large clock in the kitchen. It struck, and at the same moment a shrill bell sounded. At that, the whole kitchen seemed to come to life. First we heard the loud clicking of a clockwork, the operation of which was started by the clock-hand.

The hearth also sprang into life. A sharp ringing, and then, as though pushed by an unseen hand, a pot slipped over the "grate," only in this case the "grate" was just a plate heated by electricity from below. A tubular arm turned over the kettle and let water flow in, while at

the same time from another tube cocoa powder flowed, mixed with sugar and milk, in exactly measured portions, and a rotary mixing device descended from the ceiling. When the cocoa boiled up, after a few moments, the kettle was automatically shoved back from the grate.

Mr. Holborn went back with me into the great engine room. "That is how the entire meal is prepared," said he. "Thus you may see how pieces of meat are cut by automatically driven knives and thrown in the pan. You are right, perhaps it is all a toy, but it is a very ingenious toy, and it has serious value. This little clock which operates all the apparatus in the kitchen is proof that the realization of our great plans lies within the realm of possibility."



(Illustration by Paul)

I saw, for the first time, the most remarkable fish, which in the cool of the night, climb up on the branches of trees.

CHAPTER VII

A Terrible Warning

WE HAD EATEN together of meat that had roasted itself, vegetables that had boiled themselves, and this cocoa that had poured itself into the kettle. We had lighted cigars and were sitting opposite each other.

"Only intelligence is lacking," Holborn said slowly. "Man must always supervise. The machine can cut and roast, but it doesn't know when the meat must be washed. It can only heat canned vegetables; it can cut open the cans and empty the contents, but the same machine can't clean fresh vegetables. Also the servant has to set the lever which tells the machine how many pieces of meat are to be cut and how long they are to be roasted. The machine carries out all its work wonderfully, but it will never become an artificial man."

Deep in though I looked at him, saying, "There's one more question that troubles me: who was Wenzel Aporius?"

"I didn't know him; I've only heard of him from the chief. He was a great inventor but an unhappy man. He thought out and developed all these machines, somewhere in the primeval forest of Mexico. But his mind gave way before his own work, and when he was alone with these machines, when all human beings had left him, his reason became confused and he thought he had created not machines but frightful persons who became hostile to him."

I shook my head in wonder, and he went on: "Mr. Schmidt made his acquaintance. Don't question your uncle about that time. I know it is hard for him to talk of it. He made Aporius' acquaintance when the night

of insanity was already falling about the unfortunate man, but your uncle marvelled at his work—"

Mr. Holborn was silent for a moment. Then he said softly, "There must have been something else, too. I think your uncle nearly became the son-in-law of this man. He does not speak of it. He only told me that Wenzel Aporius had a daughter who, after she had found him again, nursed him until he died. Then a few days later she herself was stricken with yellow fever and succumbed to it."

Again Holborn was silent. Then he said hesitantly, "At any rate, Mr. Schmidt has the right to call himself the heir of the great inventor, and he has never since looked at any other girl. If you some time should see a woman's picture in his room, then it is the daughter of the dead inventor whose work was lost in the primeval forest. I will tell you only one more thing, which is all I know: he possesses the diary of Wenzel Aporius."

Holborn arose. "Enough of that. I think you know now what you need to know, also why your uncle called you, why he longs for you, and why you are his hope."

Holborn's voice again became softer and he laid his hand on my shoulder. At first I had taken this man for a simple employee, then at most for an average American technician, but now a kindly emotion sounded in his voice.

"It is for you to be the assurance that he does not meet a fate like that of Wenzel Aporius. He is no longer young, and I am a year older than he. Man must not be alone with machines which he himself creates and which are stronger than himself. I believe that a fair future lies before you!"

* * *

I was lying on the couch in my room. For the moment there was really nothing to do. The big power plant was running by itself, my uncle was away, and Mr. Holborn had lain down to sleep. He had advised me too to take a nap.

"When the others have come, the real work will commence. I think we will make a trip around tonight."

I had tried to sleep, but I could not. I felt that I was afraid to be alone. Had what I had gone through in the past few days been too much for my youthful nerves? I was afraid of sleeping or rather of waking again.

How incredible all this was, yet how natural! Think of this supply of radium, unknown to any one, sufficient to revolutionize the world! It was incredible, yet explicable. I knew that mighty fragments of meteors had surely often struck our earth in earlier times. Why should not this remarkable mountain of a rock resembling glass flux be a meteor of this kind?

Doubtless there are infinitely great stores of radium on other heavenly bodies. Why should not such meteors have fallen in the desert in other places, with their precious contents isolated by chance? I got up and walked up and down my room. Why should not the idea about the machines be feasible? Why should not — ?

I realized that thinking of these machines filled me with horror, and yet I was full of enthusiasm. I felt as though in this moment I could comprehend this plan of my uncle, this Faust-like plan, of changing a desert into fruitful land.

The door opened, and Mr. Holborn entered. "You cannot sleep," he said. "I told you too much at once. Drink this!"

A Land of Wonders

IT WAS evening. I was again awakened by the fact that the light slowly brightened up, the ray passed over the wall, and the door to the bath opened. I now knew that all this was a sort of alarm clock which did not ring its bell but instead made things light up and at the same time switched on the loud speaker. This time I did not get Berlin but a melting American negro spiritual. Of course Mr. Holborn had again done the tuning in.

I bathed and went over to him. The gleam of light which went before me and which of course also obeyed an impulse sent out by Holborn or my uncle, as on the day before, showed me the way to the dining room. I already knew its secret. It was made in exactly the same way as the moving writing on the squares of great European cities.

We ate well and talked of indifferent things. The American looked at me searchingly.

"Did you sleep well?"

"Splendidly."

We ate excellent food with a good appetite, and I asked, "Was all this automatic?"

"Not entirely. Between you and me, the servant is a splendid cook, and, as I have already said, furnishes the intelligence factor."

* * *

It is now four days since I have arrived in Desert City. Four days in Desert City, and five days en route. Today was the ninth of April. To think that only ten days ago I had been at my guardian's! It seemed as if it must have been years ago. I felt like a different person, much older; with my views entirely altered—in short, a mature man.

We were on the coast. Before me was the same barren Cambridge Gulf which I had crossed at my arrival, four years—no, four days, ago. I was sitting with Holborn on the rocky coast, looking down at the jagged reefs surrounding the bay. Across there was actually a city. Here one was modest in estimating what makes a city. Here were only a number of sheet iron shacks, and the place bore the proud name of Wyndham City.

We had already been more than two days en route in our trip of exploration. This time we did not go by plane but by auto—in a car with remarkably broad wheels. It was a strange land. We had crossed the desert, an endless waste, and then we stopped by a lake! How quickly things changed their nature here. Here was a wide lake and on it black swans and long-legged gaily-colored flamingos.

In the morning we camped by the lake, putting up the tent on the shore and preparing our breakfast with the aid of the water. We had spent the entire night traveling, and now we wanted to sleep through the heat of the day.

"How remarkable that there is a lake here!"

Holborn shook his head, saying, "That is no lake. That is a puddle of rain. Probably it rained here a few hours ago."

"We noticed nothing of it."

"We were a good many kilometers away. If it does happen to rain here, which unfortunately happens very seldom, the rainfall is limited to a small area and is like a cloudburst."

We lay down and slept. It was so hot that I did not sleep well. It was not over three hours later that I awoke.

"Mr. Holborn, the lake!" I cried. I did not mean to wake him, but I was greatly startled.

The wide lake had vanished. Instead of it there lay before us the hard, cracked earth's crust, baked by the sun—just like what had covered the entire road by which we had come.

"Where is the lake?"

Holborn laughed. "I didn't want to spoil a surprise for you! That is the way Australia is. I told you it was no lake but a large puddle of rain. The hard ground does not let the water through at first. Then the upper layer softens, and a few minutes after that the water disappears into the granular layer of sand underneath. That's why a rain doesn't bring life here."

Thoughtfully I looked out on this desolate expanse. Then I pointed something out to my companion. "What is that?" I asked. "Isn't it a struggling animal?"

Mr. Holborn looked that way, took his gun, aimed, and fired. "It was a swan. I have released it."

"What was the matter with it?"

"Oh, it was just caught in the mud."

"The mud?"

"It ate and went to sleep. The swans are in the habit of sleeping when they are well fed. Then the water suddenly disappeared, and the sun dried out the mud just as quickly. When the swan awoke, it was already too late. Its feet were stuck fast in the already stone-like mud."

"Incredible!"

"Yet it is often observed. I have found flamingos that were sleeping on one leg and woke up to find themselves imprisoned thus. I have known men who laughed at that, but I always put the animals out of their misery."

"But it happens so quickly!"

"It has even happened that men lay down to sleep, then a storm surprised them, the ground softened, and when morning came, they were lying dead in the mud that had again become rigid. It is not a hospitable land, but it is a land full of wonders."

"Shan't we get the swan and at least eat it?"

"We've just had breakfast, and by noon the heat of the sun will have spoiled it. Let's leave it to the animals and be glad that we have our thermos jars, which keep our food and drink cool. Many human bones are bleaching in the deserts of Australia. Yet there is one good thing about the quickly stiffening mud," he went on; "it has preserved for us the remains of the marsupials* of prehistoric times."

A Great Plan

IT WAS the cool of evening. We were sitting on the shore, and a refreshing breeze was blowing from the ocean. Here on the beach grew many wonderful palms. The water was a clear, bright blue. It rippled over bright pink and golden sands. In it swam gaudy fish, looking almost like gorgeous butterflies. Pelicans, cranes, and black swans were on the beach and in the water. Wonderful hyacinths and strange types of large flowers with dark red calyxes stood among luxuriant ferns, while up in the palms sat loudly chattering parrots.

It was a wonderful evening, more glorious than any I had ever experienced. The setting sun had a magic coloring as it vanished in the slight mists.

This evening I had seen for the first time that most remarkable fish the flesh of which resembles a salmon, which has lungs, and which in the cool of the night comes out of the sea, climbs up on the branches of trees, and thence stares down dreamily with its great eyes.

Marvellous Australia, where the birds are held fast in ponds by the mud, where there is laughter and the cracking of whips in the trees, and where the fish leave the water and sit up in the foliage!

* * *

We were again at home. Our trip by auto had lasted six days. When we arrived, I naturally went first to the power plant. It had been working quietly, since it was so finely planned and constructed that nothing could really happen to it. When we arrived, Mr. Holborn simply pressed a lever in the sheet iron house, in a few minutes came the shrill whistle, the trap-door rose, the automatic car came up, and we went to the cavern. We could have stayed away a month.

Still, perhaps that would not have been wise, for we found the two servants dead drunk in the kitchen, with empty rum bottles beside them.

The men were less reliable than the machines!

I sat in my room. I had not been out all day. I had lying before me the exact maps made by Holborn and my uncle. On them every mountain and every little stream of water was indicated. I sat there, measured with my dividers, drew lines, and hurriedly wrote down my ideas.

I knew the entire territory by now. It was far from being all desert, for there were great expanses covered with dense bush. I was now all afire for the mighty task, for I was working out a plan for dividing the land into districts.

Strange! Twelve days before I had laughed at Desert City, and now I myself had a number of other cities on my map, and they consisted on paper of sheet iron shacks.

Mr. Holborn ate with me. "I have to leave you this afternoon," he said. "I must go to the coast. Tomorrow Mr. Allister is expected with the twelve German engineers, and I must meet him."

He did not ask me to go with him, and I was glad. I saw him start in the plane. It was toward evening, and I stood by the sheet iron hut. I did not know where the servants were. Perhaps they were again drunk in the kitchen.

I was quite alone, but by now I felt entirely at home. The levers were quite familiar to me. I went to the great engine room. I almost felt that these driving wheels and turbines had become friends of mine.

A shrill whistle sounded somewhere in the air. I ran to my uncle's room. There was writing on the ground glass: *"Landing in five minutes, Schmidt."*

I took the work which I had been doing during the past few days and put it on my uncle's desk. Then I pressed the lever, as I had seen him do. The door opened, the whistle sounded, the car stood ready, and soon I was beside the sheet iron house. I was full of delight, for I saw gliding down to the ground the giant plane which was bringing my uncle back from San Francisco.

CHAPTER VIII

An Amazing Plan

MY UNCLE had returned. I was rather disappointed at his greeting, to tell the truth. He simply jumped out of the cabin of the plane, holding a brief-case in his left hand and extending his right to me. "How do you do?" he said in English.

Evidently his thoughts were still over in America. Seeing my bewildered face he laughed and said, "You are right, lad."

But therewith he rushed past me, jumped into the car which was standing ready, evidently forgetting that I was there at all. Before I could get in, the door closed and the car disappeared in the cave.

I waited patiently until the car returned. Then I also went down and stood in the passage a bit doubtfully, because inside I could hear my uncle speaking loudly to

* An animal, such as the kangaroo, with a pouch for carrying its young.

Mr. Holborn. It seemed to me that he had quite forgotten me. I stepped to the door, it opened, and my uncle saw me and cried in an impatient tone, "Where have you been, lad? We have our hands full. Why didn't you come along with me?"

"You shut the door of the car in my face."

He looked at me and laughed. "You are right! When I return from a journey—and such a journey is really the only time in which I actually have the leisure to reflect—I'm so full of ideas that I see nothing at all. I had forgotten you."

He held out his hand to me, and then I sat down on a chair beside Holborn.

"I shall run over it again briefly. Early tomorrow the first planes will arrive. I purposely telegraphed Allister from San Francisco to have the twelve engineers spend two days viewing Sumatra. Meanwhile we must make preparations. So early tomorrow two hundred gold-miners from Alaska are to arrive. I hired these fellows in San Francisco. They are poor diggers who were not making their expenses, now that everything there is big business."

I interrupted him. "Didn't you say that white men couldn't work here?" In my travels of the past few days I had learned by personal experience how incredibly quickly one became exhausted, even through one did no work.

My uncle nodded. "You are right, but these two hundred miners are a different sort of people. They have bodies of iron, as the result of a sort of natural selection or survival of the fittest. They have worked years in Alaska in extreme cold, and before that some were in the mines of Africa. Every one of them has also dug for gold and precious stones in Australia before now.

"Their bodies are of iron, but they are the worst gang of criminals in the world. They are fellows who can work like devils, but then at night they drink up or gamble away all their money. They are freer with knives than we are with words."

While my uncle was pointing out the peculiar advantages of these people, I felt truly astonished. "And you are bringing a mob like that here?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "I need them. They can work here. I have hired them for three months. I promised them amazing wages, if they will dig canals for me. And I also agreed to give them every bit of gold and every precious stone that they find.

"They know Australia. They know that it is by no means impossible that they should find gold here. At least they imagine they may. At first they will work furiously, and then some day they will run off. Their camp is going to be fine. Of course we have to provide them with the necessary saloons and gambling-dens without which they cannot exist, and we must keep a strict watch on this gang of thieves. Tell me, lad, how would it be for you to show that you are really the genius Allister seems to think you? How would it be if I put you in charge of the colony of gold-diggers and made you responsible for the entire company?"

I must have put on a sorry expression, for my uncle laughed out loud. "No, my dear boy, even if you were a still greater genius, you couldn't do that. It takes Beelzebub to deal with devils! The director of our criminal colony will be Jim."

I was again amazed. I remembered that when Holborn and I, two days before, had come in our trip through the bush past a little lake, he had shown me Jim. He was an apparently very old little man with a leathery face, sitting half-naked on a rock on the shore of the lake in a very drunken condition, apparently engaged in singing wild negro songs in his drunken screaming voice to some tame young kangaroos.

"Are you in earnest, uncle?"

"Absolutely."

Again my uncle became perfectly businesslike. "Tonight we must erect the tents in which the company is to lodge. They are not to enter the cavern, and they are to know as little of it as possible. I will visit Mormora myself later, so that he will help us with his people."

A Flattering Offer

AS YET I had never heard of a man by the name of Mormora, and in surprise I asked who he was.

My uncle, who apparently did not like to be interrupted, shouted to me, before turning again to Holborn, "The chief of a tribe of cannibals!"

Then he continued, "I think two other planes will arrive tonight. In America I hired ten dousers.* It is urgently necessary that we bore a large number of wells. For this I need these men with their hazel rods."

Again I was amazed. "Do you believe in that?"

"To be sure. At present we have twelve engineers. The entire land must be divided into twelve districts. Each of the twelve Germans must be in full charge of a district. For the present, of course, each of them must have human labor until our machines are in action. Have you the list of the engineers?"

Holborn handed him a paper. My uncle read it off, making comments. "Morawetz, chief engineer from Dresden—he gets two hundred Arabs of the Ruad tribe. They left the port of Jeddah for here four days ago. Heinrich Stobitzer of the Brennabor plant—he has two hundred Tuaregs from the Libyan desert. They likewise started four days ago from Suez. Walter Helding of the Siemens plant—two hundred Chinese from Formosa, also already en route. Otto Kurzmuller of Nuremberg—two hundred Somali negroes, on the way from Makdichu. Karl Heinze of Potsdam—two hundred natives of Malacca, who will be here soon. Ewald Korngold of Mayence—two hundred negroes from Dar Es Salaam. That makes twelve hundred men for the present, exclusive of the gold-miners. For the time being we shall operate only the six districts lying about us, and Messrs. Gustav Bolle, Heinrich Trager, Kurt Linz, Eugen Moller, Max Herchner and Willi Mense will each be assigned to one of these gentlemen as assistants."

"And I, uncle?"

"I shall tell you this evening."

I really felt somewhat grieved, but I said nothing.

* * *

It was evening. I was out of sorts. Holborn was off for all day in a plane, and my uncle had withdrawn to his room and expressly declared that he did not wish to be disturbed. I sat alone, quite vexed. To be sure, it was without reason. I vainly told myself the truth about it: I had left the technical school only a few months before, and I had given no proof of my ability. Of course, in the last few days I had constructed great plans. But if Mr. Allister thought me a genius, he was absurd.

Nevertheless, I had taken such pains in working out my plan, and now probably uncle was not even looking at it at all.

The loud speaker sounded: "Please come to me."

Knowing that it was my uncle, I got up and went to his room. He had my plan in his hand.

*Men whose business it is to locate underground wells by means of instruments.

"Did you write this?"

"In the last two days, yes. I thought—"

He smiled oddly. "You thought you were giving me a new idea with this plan. Unfortunately you were mistaken."

At this I felt aggrieved anew.

"On the contrary, all these are things—don't look so disappointed! What I am saying to you now is not blame. You may be quite pleased if I tell you that you worked out the plan of operation exactly as I had decided to have it. I am glad that I did not even show it to Holborn. He is a very intelligent person, but he can only carry out what someone has designed for him. I am glad that you understood me. You are intelligent—you have the gift of comprehension. I hope that you will be equally energetic in execution. I saw that you were vexed because I did not give you one of the positions in charge. I have something else for you. You are my nephew. You are now as good as a son to me. Some day you will be successor. You will now be what they so well term in Germany a sort of junior chief. Will you assist me and go everywhere with me? Are you satisfied, lad?"

"Uncle—!"

"Don't apologize! I understand that you can't see into my thick skull. Come now, our plane is ready! Tonight I must acquaint you with one of my dear friends—with Mormora, the cannibal chief."

* * *

We had flown for three hours, just my uncle and I. I steered the plane, and he indicated the direction. We had flown northeast, and dense woods lay at our feet. In between, of course, were small stretches of level stony desert. Here my uncle ordered me to descend.

"Just leave the plane here. We don't want to startle our friend, for he still has some distaste for the magic birds of the Europeans."

CHAPTER IX

The Dance of the Kangaroos

WE walked through the gloomy wood, my uncle holding his compass in his hand. "We can't miss them," he said. "They have a different dwelling-place each month, the poor devils."

"Why don't you take them on as workmen?"

"It's impossible! You might just as well hitch a lion to a plow. Forcing a free Bushman to regular work is like condemning him to death. These savages are like children. They will work, but only like a child at play. They must have the feeling that at any moment they can throw away the toy and pick up another one. Compulsion makes them unhappy. I have also taken thought for their future. In my will I have stated that this mountainous region and these woods are to belong to them and that they are not to be molested. They are not to be civilized, either, for that would be the same as condemning such savages to extinction."

Uncle stopped speaking, stood still a moment listening and then cautiously and noiselessly leaped a few paces ahead and crouched behind a tree.

I thought of some danger, the more as my nerves were on edge at the thought of meeting savage cannibals in the night. Though my uncle had only laughed at the suggestion, I had put a loaded revolver in my pocket when we left. He had forbidden me to bring a rifle. Now I put my hand in my pocket and gripped the butt of the weapon.

Uncle beckoned to me, at the same time putting his finger to his lips and indicating that I should be quiet. All the Indian stories of my youth were running through my head. Silently I sneaked up to him. He softly whispered, "Don't speak. Make no sound. Look over there!"

Before us the trees opened up, showing a little meadow, incredibly luxuriant. At its edge, hardly a hundred paces from us, was a herd of about fifty giant kangaroos.

I had often eaten their meat in the past few days. During my auto trip I had likewise frequently seen one of these animals fleeing in wild leaps, but this was the first time I had had a chance to see them at close quarters. Some of them appeared to have eaten their fill, for they lay at full length on the ground. Their muscular hind-legs and tails were stretched out, but their short fore-legs were drawn up, so that they looked somewhat like sleeping people. Others were hobbling along comically, using their tails like canes, to preserve their balance. Still others sat up on their tails and hind-legs with their fore-legs crossed on their breasts, while their gaze was straight upward. They almost seemed to be praying. The wind came from them to us, which explained why the leader of the herd did not notice us.

My uncle took my hand and bent close to my ear. "Now be very still, this is a rare sight."

A most remarkable game started. Out hopped a young kangaroo cavalier, evidently in love with a kangaroo maiden. On his hind-legs and his tail he leaped about the object of his affections in an incredibly droll manner. She, sitting still very calmly, followed him by turning her head, gazing at him with her extremely stupid eyes.

Now he grew bolder. He made a bleating noise somewhat like a hoarse cough, hunched down beside her—it was as though he knelt down—and began to rub her back with his fore foot—I had almost said, with his hand.

Miss Kangaroo, however, was a lady very well brought up. She spit at her violent lover and struck at him. Still he managed to give her a proper hug with his fore-legs. Now they both stood up in this embrace, propped themselves up by their tails, and bleated and shook their heads as if in confusion.

They really looked almost like a couple about to dance, and their example appeared to be contagious. Suddenly various other such dancing couples appeared on the meadow.

"All they need is a jazz band to play for them!" said my uncle aloud. As he said it, I could hardly restrain my laughter, and right then the leader of the herd uttered a whistling sound. In the same instant the entire herd had vanished into the bush in wild flight, all but one large animal.

The latter was crossing the field in grotesque bounds, and now I saw that behind it raced a savage, clad only in a loin-cloth. When the beast saw him close behind it, it ceased to flee and turned.

I felt sorry for the poor kangaroo. Leaning against a tree, it stood up with anxious, gentle, kindly eyes. At that moment a blow of a club fell on the animal's head. I wanted to interfere, by my uncle held me back. The kangaroo struck out with its fore-legs. It looked like a regular boxing match between the man and the beast, but naturally the savage with his club was stronger, and soon the poor kangaroo lay dead on the ground.

My uncle whispered to me: "You are right, it is cruel, but they have to live, and they have no firearms. It's

all right. It's better for them to be eating kangaroos than——"

He did not finish the sentence but stepped up to the savage, who was engaged in getting the animal up on his shoulders.

"Hello, Miami!"

The savage jumped up, dropping his animal, his startled eyes looking at first glance like a beast of prey ready to leap. When he recognized my uncle, he threw himself on the ground.

"Kobi!" he said. I learned only later that this was the expression for "master." Then my uncle began to speak to him. I of course did not understand what he was saying for it was in the language of the savages, but I heard him use the name Mormora. At this the young man nodded.

Since he looked at me with distrustful eyes, my uncle said something, drew me close and embraced me, while he put his other arm about the young savage. The latter hesitated for a moment, and then he embraced me, too. It was certainly a novel sensation.

The young fellow was medium height, dressed in only a loin-cloth, with all kinds of gaudy decorations and artificial protuberant scars on his body. He was so thin that you could see his ribs through his brownish leathery skin. His hair, wild and filthy with mud, stood out all around his head like a gigantic wig in disarray.

I had not yet been long enough in Australia to find this embrace other than unappetizing and painful. Yet I forced myself not only to endure it but also to return it. Since my uncle had brought it about, doubtless it was necessary in order to seal the friendship.

Then my uncle, perhaps remembering the peace-pipe of the American Indians, offered cigars to the young man and myself. Smoking we walked along together in the gloomy wood. Before long, we heard noises—the screeching of parrots, the gloomy howling of dogs. As a matter of fact, they were not dogs but dingos—painfully tamed dingos, which after all are probably nothing but domestic dogs become wild. And now the wood grew light. We came by a little cornfield, after which we saw the village of the savages.

The Savages

IT was only a number of very simple huts made of leaves: very simple things, woven together of the twigs and stems, as well as the shoots, of the bamboo. In an open place before the huts were fires over which kettles hung and about these fires were men and women, no more clothed than our guide. All were screaming together in confusion.

Miami uttered a cry, and at once all became silent and disappeared into their huts. At once the men came out again with long spears, woven shields, and bows and arrows in their hands. While Miami ran over to them, we quietly stood still and waited.

Miami was now with one of the men who had especially brilliantly colored welts on his body. The latter's hair, which was dyed red, was adorned with feathers of the bird of paradise. He listened to the report of the young man and then called an order, at which the women rushed to the kettles and busied themselves in carrying them away.

My uncle, holding me by the hand, walked quickly up to this man, who evidently was the chief, and greeted him in English.

"I greet my brother Mormora."

"My white brother is welcome."

"Let your women go about their work. I do not look into your kettle nor you into mine."

An understanding smile flashed over the face of the chief, and he beckoned the women. We squatted down beside the fire. At a sign of the chief a woman brought corn-cakes, while Miami broiled a piece of the kangaroo he had just killed on a spit.

During the next hour, we ate the kangaroo meat and the corn-cakes, while the savages devoured the contents of their kettles. I had to force myself to eat the stuff, for I could not rid myself of the idea that it was human flesh, though my uncle assured me it was not.

"That seldom happens, and they are not now on the warpath, or else they would be painted very differently."

Just the same—!

Finally uncle took off his knapsack and removed from it two bottles.

"It is poison to them, but I can't help it. I give it to them only seldom and in small amounts, but today I need them."

The rum bottles made the rounds and were soon empty. Then the drums reverberated, and the savages danced enthusiastically. They sprang toward one another, clashing their shields, swinging their spears in the air, and shaking their bristling hair. Meanwhile uncle spoke to the chief and he nodded his head.

Again we sat in the plane, now on our return. The savages had already started ahead of us, running through the wood at lightning speed with their chief leading the way.

My uncle said to me, "They are poor children, destined to destruction. They seem to be more bloodthirsty than they are. Since the white man has been lord of Australia, already for centuries, nothing belongs to these people but the loneliest wilderness. There was certainly no human flesh in the kettles. It is only very rarely, only when a serious war breaks out between two tribes, that they become cannibals.

"It is necessary that the white man, who has not room enough in his native land, should spread out, but I am sorry for the natives. The Indians of North America are as good as dead. Those in South America will die out. The former proud inhabitants of the Moluccas have been rooted out by the Dutch. Likewise the Bushmen of Australia will die out—just like the beasts of the primeval forest. It is sad, it must be!"

It was toward morning that the savages arrived at Desert City—not much later than we. Holborn admitted them into the great supply cave, whence they took mighty bundles of canvas and many hundreds of iron stakes.

My uncle permitted the savages to go into the cave, after which the entrances were again carefully closed and were planted with prickly pears, which grow luxuriantly in a few days, so that the arriving gold-miners would not be able to find them.

"A savage does not steal. A savage who is once your friend remains your friend unless you wrong him. The white mob is of a different breed, unfortunately."

Morning came. Now Desert City was more like a city. Beside the sheet iron shack stood four great tents. Three of them were each to house four of the twelve German engineers. The fourth was for the dousers. Several hundred meters away other large tents were erected which the gold-miners were to occupy for a few days.

A few dozen native women, directed by one of our two white servants—a man who had lived a wild life and had been a bird of paradise hunter, also—were engaged in fixing up a kitchen, to take care of the anticipated cooking on a large scale.

CHAPTER X

The Work Begins

TWO planes had arrived, bringing the dousers, and then departing immediately.

They were strange men, and at present there was strife among them. Some were very modern persons and had with them apparatus made of fine metal wires. They gave extensive lectures on their subjects and seemed to have a scientific basis for their work.

The others were in appearance children of nature. They had long hair and wore silk shirts open at the collar. They wore sandals and no stockings. With them they brought rods of birch and willow and now they all sat in one of the guest-tents and argued, one against another.

I asked my uncle whether he believed in these men, but he shrugged his shoulders. "I believe nothing, but I also deny nothing. I know that the German government in South-west Africa often used such well-seekers, and they are said to have been successful. If they find subterranean watercourses, very well; if not, then it was in vain."

Things became more and more active here. The twelve German engineers arrived and Mr. Allister with them. I think that he had made a good selection. They were all energetic young men. It was an interesting time when Uncle Heinrich greeted them. He took them down below with him, whereas he simply received the American well-seekers up in the tents.

In the great cavern that served ordinarily as a dining room, a map of our territory was hung up. It was divided into twelve districts, six of which we were to begin operating first. My uncle explained his plan. At first the faces of the engineers were incredulous, some even mocking, but they all agreed in the end to these schemes.

Morawetz was to establish a new power station in the south. There was a large lake there, Carnegie Lake, which, we had determined, did not dry up at any time of the year. My uncle thought that it too was connected with a great underground river or some other body of water. Accordingly we were to erect a new power plant there.

Heinrich Stobitzer of the Brennabor plant, who had formerly been a railroad construction engineer, was first to equip the district lying between Desert City and Carnegie Lake with a railroad. Walter Helding of the Siemens plant, the electrical engineer, was to put up great masts as quickly as possible in the district to the east of us. There we intended to make experiments with radium for the acceleration of plant growth.

It was a very long speech that my uncle made. When he had finished, the eyes of all were alight with enthusiasm. Doubts had disappeared.

My uncle pressed Mr. Allister's hand. "I think you chose the right men."

Two mad weeks passed. Often it seemed as though the sky were filled with airships that were flying about like swarms of gigantic birds. It was well that my uncle had also bought Cambridge Gulf. Since Australia was first inhabited, there had surely never been so many ships in this bay as now. New ones arrived daily, and the two hundred Chinese, working under the personal supervision of Mr. Allister, had their hands full in unloading them as fast as possible, towing them out of the harbor again, and setting to work on others.

The inhabitants of Wyndham across the bay were envious. They had in former days objected to being sold with the other land to the "dyspeptic American." Now they were beside themselves to see how a new city had blossomed forth here in a few days. Uncle had named it Allister City, after its founder. It looked as though some great agricultural exposition were to be opened here. Monstrous crates stood about, in which were packed parts of turbines, immense dynamos, thousands of tons of steel rails, electric locomotives, parts of great masts, and whole hills of rolls of copper wire.

Mr. Allister went about quietly among all the confusion. He was the only one who knew where things were. I realized that if he were to die suddenly now, the work would be delayed for months.

We greeted each other for the first time since our original meeting.

"Hello, how do you?" He shook my hand with a laugh. "Are you already at home in Desert City?"

THE district in the vicinity of Desert City soon acquired a wild look. Heavens, what men the gold-miners were! Each had his whole life's history written in his face—histories of wild passions, frequently illustrated, as it were, by red scars on cheek and brow.

The miners made a peculiar splotch of color in our peaceful life. We and the other Europeans preferred to do most of our work at night and rest by day. This reversal of the normal procedure was rendered easy by the great clusters of lights erected on high poles, equipped with powerful arc-lights and flooding the land at night with brilliance. While we thus changed night into day, the miners worked out in the burning sun. Their wild greedy faces showed no effect of the heat. While their nervous fists, gripped about shovels, dug out the earth, with glowing eyes they looked through this dirt, letting it sift through their fingers, whenever the overseers, who really were no different from themselves, glanced away a moment. Occasionally they actually had the good luck to find a gleaming grain of gold.

At night, when the cool breezes blew in from the ocean; when the dousers would slowly walk along in the light of great electric lamps hung about their necks, holding their twigs or metal rods and looking like magicians or sorcerers; when the surveyors were hurrying to work; when Engineer Helding's two hundred Chinese were busy erecting the great iron masts and running the high tension wires—then all was noise and confusion in the gold-miners' city of tents.

In the midst of the city stood a great shed pieced together partly of sheet iron and partly of old crate-covers. In it was a Chinese. No one knows exactly where he had come from. At any rate, my uncle had not brought him there.

He had a crafty face and an untrustworthy expression. In front of this shack which he had put up himself was a great sign with the enticing inscription, "Victoria Hotel."

Of course it was not a hotel but a wretched saloon, all in one big room. At one side was a sort of buffet on which stood all sorts of questionable foods and a number of bottles of various colored distilled liquors, all with high-sounding names but all containing miserable fusel oil.

This part of the room was purposely separated from the rest by a lattice. In the other part, tables stood along the walls where dice were rolled every night,

while in the great open space in the centre the gold-miners did wild dancing together, making the music for it themselves.

My uncle shrugged his shoulders. "They are a necessary evil," said he. "They dig like the devil."

SIX weeks passed A narrow-gauge railway was laid with little electric locomotives that drew tiny cars, each of the cars carrying the heavy parts of the new power stations which we were to build then. A whole ship-load of camels and elephants arrived. We were to make the experiment of introducing these powerful beasts of burden. Wireless stations were erected on Mt. Russell, at Lady Edith Lagoon, halfway between Mt. Russell and our central plant, which we now called Desert City, in the south at Carnegie Lake, and in the north at Cambridge Gulf. We could now telephone through a great part of our territory.

Four more weeks passed. In the meantime the fourteen hundred colored workmen had been very active. To be sure, they semed lost in the vast territory. Everywhere masts were rising and carrying electricity over the land. Everywhere iron drills were eating into the rock. Everywhere could be heard the sound of the blasting which was tearing great holes for the canals.

I was almost continually traveling about in a plane. It was one with a very comfortable cabin which at the same time served me as a work-room. It was a wonderful invention of my uncle's, with walls strongly insulated and containing apparatus for artificial cooling. There was a whole system of pipe-coils in which sodium chloride and magnesium chloride solutions circulated, kept in motion by the action of the airplane motor. Thus it was pleasantly cool in the cabin even during the greatest heat of the sun. In this plane I went south to the Virginia Range and east beyond Mt. Russell, as well as to the Teano Range in the west, where our territory ended. Even here great masts were erected everywhere, and high tension wires were laid. Here the Matthews rays were to serve as a sort of frontier protection, in case it should ever be necessary to keep undesired guests at a distance.

One evening my uncle called for me to go with him, but this time not by plane. It was a Saturday, and we never worked on Sunday.

It was only a short trip by auto, to the region where Helding was working with his Chinese. Everywhere stood masts bearing great apparatus of remarkable shapes.

They looked like lamps and were covered above by great asbestos screens. At fixed distances apart over the ground great sprayers were set up, to which pumps conducted water from recently bored wells.

We stood on a hill, and my uncle pointed about with his hand. When I had arrived, this had been a wretched sandy desert. Now everything was green. I had been here a week before when the first shoots were just sticking their heads up out of the ground. Now they were already little young plants.

"Do you know what this is? It is our first cocoanut plantation. In those uprights up there are little bits of radium. During the day I let them send their radiation over the ground, which is watered during this time. It is incredible how much growth is accelerated thereby. I think we shall have the first crop in a year. It will be only a small one, but it will prove that I am right in my ideas."

Then suddenly, as he finished, a wild noise reached our ears, a wild noise from the tent-city of the gold-miners. We hurried back in our auto. A great fire was blazing up, the village of the gold-miners was in flames!

CHAPTER XI.

Some Reflections.

TO-DAY it is exactly a year since I arrived in Desert City. It seems to me as though it must have been at least ten years. This morning I looked at myself in the glass. I think that if my Berlin friends saw me they would hardly recognize me. My figure has remained about the same, thin and sinewy, but my features are much sharper and my face and hands are leathery.

To-day is Sunday, and therefore we do not work. Holborn is in the south, and my uncle has made a flying trip to Mt. Russell. He again needs money and has gone to his great treasure chamber, the old mine.

This time he took with him Morawetz, whom he has appointed chief engineer. Morawetz is surely a very clever man. He is a diligent electrical engineer with ideas of his own. Very often uncle sits with him and works out new experiments. Frequently signs appear now that the people over in Canberra are becoming curious. They proposed to build a railway into our territory. That would not be a bad idea, since a line already runs at Laverton near Mt. Margaret, and from there to the southern boundary of our land is only a few kilometers.

If that were done we would have a connection with the harbor of Freemantle on the west coast of Australia. In many respects that would be much more convenient than our Cambridge Gulf in the north, which often greatly imperils the ships. But uncle does not want any connection by railroad with the cities of Australia, for he does not want the Australians to know what happens in our territory.

Certainly they are all inquisitive. They mock at us and shake their heads. Surely the gentlemen in Canberra believed that this is all simply a fantastic whim. They are thoroughly convinced that my uncle will soon lose all his interest in the place, that his money will all be gone, and that he will leave the country.

Naturally we read the papers which are published in the large cities of Australia. The most remarkable things about us are in them. The people already know that ships and great airplanes (we now have also three large dirigibles) continually bring us all possible things, but they have not yet heard of any results from it all. They do not understand whence come the millions which we possess, but they mock at the way we spend them.

I went up the hill behind our central plant by the little cog-railway. We now have a large number of such railways. They have no rails, merely a chain which runs over rollers, and little cars with broad wheels which can go anywhere. These cars are like little automobiles, provided with motors of their own, but in front they have a pole which can be depressed. One goes under one's own power. Where it is necessary and where one meets these chains, which continually rotate, one depresses the pole. This catches between the links of the chain, and the car is drawn along.

It is the same system as was installed in San Francisco to help the street railways along. We have already provided enormous stretches of ground with such chains. This is much quicker than building railways. Long metal boxes, with a slit on top and the rollers and chain

(Illustration by Paul)

The dousers walked slowly along in the light of lamps hanging from their necks. They held twigs or metal rods in their hands . . . . . looking like magicians.

built in, are simply sunk in the stony ground. The chain is stretched taut and connected with our electric power station, and things are ready for traffic.

This serves very well wherever there is a stony desert, and we have no lack of them here. In sandy districts, to be sure, it is impossible, since there the wind would at once fill the slit with sand, putting the chain out of commission.

It is very practical for traffic to our harbor, for both small and large cars can use this chain and we are not forced to any special rail-gauge. It is merely a question of having the tow-pole fit into the chain. For traffic in the sandy deserts we have immense electric locomotives and cars, built in the model of a tank or caterpillar tractor. Of course they move much more slowly, but they overcome every difficulty.

By the chain-road I travelled up the hill. The hill is actually a marvel right in the midst of the everyday things of our life. It is the pride and solace of my uncle, for it is still the one and only answer to our problem.

The hill has pretty grounds, green turf, well-tended flower beds, and a very charming little grove of young cocoanut palms. At the same time I remember well how desolate it looked when I arrived here a year ago. It was nothing but a miserable sand hill. At that time I did not believe my uncle when he told me that this yellow crumbly stuff was not sand at all but a sun-dried stratum of humus* released from the rocks by weathering.

Daily this whole hill is artificially watered by our spraying machines, and likewise daily for six hours the radium apparatus works on the hill. Hence this wondrous growth in the desert.

We have therefore a proof that it is possible to cultivate the desert. Yet we are aware of a disappointment. In this entire district which embraces about ten square kilometers, we have the lookout hill plantings of wheat, corn, sugar, cocoa, and coffee, and groves of young palms and eucalyptus trees, but it is really only like a great botanical garden. Can it really be done this way over the entire land? Apparently not.

A Growing City.

I SIT up on the hill. Here a little lookout pavilion has been erected, and the chain-road runs as far

*A vegetable mold which has the capacity of exercising a soil's possibility of absorbing and retaining water.

as this. At my feet lies Desert City. During the past year it has changed much, and it is really beginning to be a little city. Several streets have been made with real houses. To be sure, these houses are not like those in other countries. They came over the ocean all ready, in great sections. They are made of metal and have within the walls a space for cooling purposes, which makes them very pleasant to live in.

This was the patent of an American inventor. Though he was laughed at for it, my uncle bought it of him. Now we live in such houses. I have one together with Mr. Holborn, and we have our offices in it.

A little further down the valley stands the great hangar for the Zeppelins. It is built of similar material. Nearby is the great flying field. All in all there are now about five hundred white men already living here, among whom are about three hundred Germans.

Desert City is beginning to look like the centre of a spider web. In all directions run narrow gauge railways. At present they total one hundred kilometers. Another network of rails runs in a circle around the outside and joins them all together. We intend to start cultivating this first circle, our first farm, in a few months. At present the engineers are building four great concrete towers at equal intervals over the circle. Mighty pipes are being laid from our central station to these towers.

Slowly comes the evening. I look down at the brightly lighted city which is slowly blossoming out. It is certainly a remarkable city, in which there are no women but only busily working men. At least, there are no European women.

I cannot help thinking of the evening when I stood up here with my uncle, the evening when the riot among the gold-miners broke out. We raced down hill with the auto, but all was really over by the time we arrived. The light tents had quickly burned. The gold-miners had vanished collectively. When we cleared away the ruins, we found several dead bodies, among them the keeper of the gambling den and also, unfortunately, old Jim.

The rest were off and away, and they remained out of sight. It is certainly hard to find two hundred people in so vast a territory. Uncle shrugged his shoulders.

"It is not my fault," he said, "if they lose their lives. They will attempt to dig gold somewhere on their own account. It was a mistaken effort on our part to dig canals here. Human labor here is useless."

Likewise the well-seekers returned home six months ago. At any rate, they did some good, for we have bored twenty productive wells. For the present these wells are a sort of oasis in the roads across our territory.

My uncle is at Mt. Russell with Chief Engineer Morawetz. They not only want to fetch a new supply of pitchblende, from which we now obtain the radium in the special chemical laboratories in our central station itself, but they also want to plan other things.

Recently Chief Mormora visited my uncle several times. These are always very remarkable visits for the chief is accustomed to appear in full warpaint and has with him a few young warriors, likewise Tena Ingeit, the conjurer, in an extremely fantastic costume.

Mormora always sends the young warriors ahead. Then my uncle goes to meet him quite solemnly and personally conducts him into the old cave, where uncle still lives.

I notice that many of the Europeans are surprised to see the friendly manner with which our chief deals with the chieftain of the savages. Mormora dwells with his tribe even now in the forest and bush about Mt. Russell eternally guarding as it were, the old mine.

He is certainly a good guard, for to him this mine is an abode of the old gods, and the precious radium is worthless, so far as he is concerned. He was there several times in the past few weeks. He saw white men snooping about near the mountain. Probably they were some of the gold-miners, who are still swarming about the neighborhood.

Once we even found a dead man in the mine. The rays had killed him; the chieftain said that the god of the mountain had judged him.

It is necessary to be cautious. There are too many people here at present, and we want to try out the effect of the Rindell-Matthews rays, which perhaps later will protect our whole territory from enemies.

Ambitious Plans.

A HIGH tension cable has been laid from our central power station to the mountain. Chief Engineer Morawetz is now to install the apparatus. I do not know why I have such a distaste for Morawetz. He is certainly the most industrious of all, and uncle treats him with distinction. But I do not like him. His eyes are deceitful and he always has a mocking expression on his face, even when talking with my uncle.

Once I mentioned this to Holborn. I am very fond of honest old Holborn, but he only laughed and replied, "Are you jealous of Morawetz?"

That vexed me, and since then I have been silent about him. I should not like my uncle to imagine that I am jealous.

There are a few others among the engineers whom I do not like, and they are actually the best and most industrious. Am I really jealous of them? They are Stobitzer, Helding, and Kurzmuller. These three have accomplished remarkable results, but on Sundays they are always together, gambling away all their salary, scolding about the work, and making fun of uncle's plans.

Of course they do not do this openly. We now have a club in Desert City—for drinking purposes—a sort of saloon. It is really intended only for the airplane pilots, having a separate drinking room for the camel drivers and for the *mahouts** of the elephants. For the actual officials a great casino has been built, containing also guest rooms.

Our two former servants are running these two houses. One manages the casino, the other the lodgings and saloon, in which there is of course gambling as well as drinking.

The saloon manager is the same servant who first received me on my arrival. He often talks with me. From him I know that Morawetz, Stobitzer, Helding, and frequently Kurzmuller as well often spend the entire Sunday playing cards in the room for the camel drivers. I regard that as undignified. I am not the only one who thinks so, for I find that the other engineers are not intimate with them. It is a pity, since they are the best workers of all.

Six months more have passed. The days are much the same, and we are making slow progress.

Sometimes I am worried about my uncle. He sits all day at his plans and allows himself only a few hours of rest. During the cool of the night we are often traveling about together.

To-day was an interesting day. Chief Engineer Mora-

*The keeper or driver of an elephant generally a Mohammedan.

wetz completed the high tension system at Mt. Russell and we all gathered there. It was a regular party in the country, the whole force celebrating it. Even Mormora was invited with his whole tribe.

There was actually little to see. An artificial cave was blasted in the pointed chimney-like cone of the vitreous mountain above the entrance to the mine and the old "Aztec cavern." We called it that, though we well know that it was not Aztecs who built it. Still we do not know what sort of persons left behind the sculptures, which after all have some resemblance to those of the Aztecs.

In this newly made cave, Morawetz with the assistance of Helding, set up the great machines which are fed by the current from our central plant. These are to produce the Rindell-Matthews rays.

We all assembled in the garden below, which to-day is green and blooming in the same heavenly beauty as when I first saw it. Morawetz was inside at his machine. A shrill whistle sounded, the signal that he had switched on the rays.

We had built a large number of little airplane models. We had also erected a machine, temporarily connected with the high tension circuit, with which we governed the little model planes, which of course were unmanned. This was the same invention as was tested by the German inventor Wirth years ago on the Wannsee near Berlin, long before the war.

During the war it took a very different development. It simply consists of building into the airship a receiving station which is exactly tuned in wavelength to the sending station on the ground. Every controlling movement sent out is received by a carefully worked out relay. This again releases the automatic rudders, which are stabilized by the use of gyroscopes. To be sure, these little plane models are very expensive, but that does not matter to us.

From the mountain came a loud even humming sound. It was the warning signal, which is known to all the inhabitants of our territory, also to our savages. Everywhere about the mountain are great signs: "When the humming sound comes from the mountain, do not approach for it is dangerous."

At first we were disappointed, most of all the savages. Then we saw Morawetz's dog. He was down with us, but suddenly he went to look for his master. Before we could call him back, he went running toward the mine. All at once the dog seemed entirely surrounded by a confusion of tiny little flashes of lightning, then he was wrapped in flames, and in a few seconds he was consumed.

We were sorry for the poor dog. Startled and yet enthusiastic, we had mixed feeling about the success of our machine.

The experimental planes were launched. Some went very low, close to the bush, others higher, and still others higher than the mountain. Twenty such little models were simultaneously directed toward the mountain from all sides at various heights. At just the same moment all twenty caught fire and burned up in a few seconds. It was just as though an infernal invisible wall surrounded the mountain.

Uncle laughed. "I think our radium is safe," he said.

The savages trembled in mortal terror. The chieftain hardly dared shake my uncle's hand. When the humming now ceased and Morawetz came down from the mountain unharmed, the natives fled from him as though he were a devil.

CHAPTER XII

What Was Overheard

DURING the night the four of us—uncle, Morawetz, Holborn, and I—put on the finishing touches. There is a completely concealed connection running from the machine in the mountain to the little grotto in which the soda spring flows out. We have equipped this connection with a switch, the position of which is known only to the four of us. Now we can switch on the machine from the outside and know from the humming sound that the mountain is protected. The guard at the radio tower which is very close to the mountain hears the humming and can at once inform us if the machine stops working. But we know our reliable machines. It is quite sufficient to look at them once in two weeks.

That evening my uncle put something into Morawetz's hand. It turned out to be a large sum of money, for uncle is generous. But I was again vexed. Morawetz sat in the camel drivers' saloon and gambled until early morning—not merely with the other three engineers who are his friends, but with a couple of fellows with very forbidding faces. I should be willing to bet that they were two of the runaway gold-miners.

Chance occasioned my taking a message from my uncle to one of the *mahouts*, for otherwise I never enter this saloon. The company was so drunk and absorbed in their game that they did not even notice me. The two men whom I took for gold-miners must have found something, after all, for they had before them little sacks from which they poured grains of gold upon the table. I saw their crafty glances and their malicious smiles as they shuffled the cards.

It was nothing to me if the four engineers were so silly as to gamble away their money. But it grieved me that they should do so with such scoundrels.

When I left the saloon, I went quickly by plane to Allister City on Cambridge Gulf. It has developed finely and is much larger than Desert City. Of course the Chinese live here—over a thousand of them—for here is the office for the care of freight. We are glad to have the foreigners live here on the shore. We do not want any of them inland until we have made more progress. Here Mr. Allister rules as a sort of king.

It was sunrise when my plane again landed in Desert City. It was Sunday; we had purposely held the inaugural ceremony at Mt. Russell on Saturday. As I was going home from the airport, I saw two men staggering along before me. To my disgust, I recognized Morawetz and Stobitzer. Morawetz was in an angry mood and was cursing away.

"All the money has gone to the devil. The old man was not stingy. A hundred thousand marks in a night. It would have been best for me to have taken the first plane to Europe. I am a wretched fellow, a miserable bum."

I felt a repulsion toward him. When he is drunk, he goes on an orgy of repentance. Stobitzer comforted him, mumbling indistinctly.

"Nonsense—you do not need to give it a thought."

"Why not?"

"You are right at the source of supply."

"What do you mean?"

"Just need to shut off the current. You know how. Not a bad idea—what difference if the old man has a pound or two less?"

In a sudden outburst of wrath Morawetz seized him

by the collar. "Are you persuading me to become a thief?"

Stobitzer shook him off. "Nonsense, we are both drunk."

Purposely I was keeping a bit behind them. It was certainly better that they should not see me. They did not need to know that I had overheard them, though it was very probable that by the next day they would have forgotten everything.

I went back to my dwelling, the pretty house in which I live with Holborn. It even has European furniture. The junior chief of New Australia lives like a prince.

I felt grateful to my good Uncle Heinrich. I hoped that his great plan would succeed.

But when I thought of the two drunkards, I was alarmed. Should I speak about it to Holborn? He would simply laugh at me and say that they were both drunk. Should I tell my uncle? It seemed a base thing to accuse others. I preferred to keep my eyes open and to watch them myself.

The Great Trial

AGAIN my uncle had a great day. It was also a jubilee for me, too. Almost two years had passed since I came here. On this day the first test was to be made, now that the network of rails was completed. The great agricultural machines stood ready on all these tracks. There were immense things like steam-shovels, with arms rotating on an axle, these arms holding steel shovels with very sharp edges. These were intended to break up the ground first. Behind them stood others, intended to break up the clods still more and turn them over again. Behind these stood harrows, with sowing machines last of all.

On all the many lines of track running out in all directions from the centre of the spider web, the apparatus stood exactly in the middle. At the central point was a platform. On this stood a table with the same spider web repeated in miniature. Here was a great number of electric buttons. My uncle stood there, surrounded by his twelve engineers, my two friends Holborn and Allister, and myself.

This was the day when this first circle, two kilometers in diameter, was to be planted for the first time. Our faces were tense, those of most of the engineers being a bit mocking. There was a buzzing sound in the air. For the first time we had invited guests, even some from Canberra. Uncle had sent a great Zeppelin over there. Lord Albernoon, who had not visited us since the signing of the contract, was coming himself.

The airship descended, and shortly afterward the guests of honor drove up before our platform in an auto.

"I did not want to make your lordship wait," said uncle. "We shall start right away."

The peer looked about him and cast some sarcastically smiling glances at Mr. Spencer, his secretary.

"May I ask what is to happen here?"

"First we are going to make a cornfield out of this circle, the diameter of which is two kilometers."

"Well, well!"

"Therefore we shall first till the soil by automatic means and then sow it."

His lordship could hardly conceal his mockery.

"And you believe, do you, most honorable magician, that something will grow here?"

"Certainly. This mellow ground which has been unused for thousands of years is splendid *humus*."

"Assuredly so, but I have been told that any soil must be sufficiently watered before anything can thrive on it."

"You are perfectly right, of course."

"Then perhaps you plan to spray about a bit with watering pots."

The jest was now quite evident. But while I felt vexed and the other engineers, who did not have much faith in our success, showed painfully affected expressions, uncle replied very calmly:

"Of course I am first going to make it rain. I shall do it as in the tropics. I shall make it rain for two hours each day at exactly the same time. That will suffice for the present."

Lord Albernoon became serious and looked searchingly at my uncle. "You are going to do what?" He thought him insane.

"Make it rain. Of course that is not too difficult for the present advancement of science. Will your lordship permit us to start?"

The peer fell back heavily into the armchair provided for him. "I am curious to see it."

"Please have the kindness to look at those towers through this telescope."

There were four immense rectangular towers, erected at equal intervals. They looked something like great cable towers used in mining, also somewhat like towers each floor of which was a hothouse.

"Now I am switching on the power," said my uncle, pressing a button. For some time there was nothing at all to be seen, but then uncle said, "If you now look at the towers, is there not already forming over each of them a little stratum of mist? In the glowing sun which is now blazing down on the towers you can make out very well the vibration of the air."

Artificial Rain!

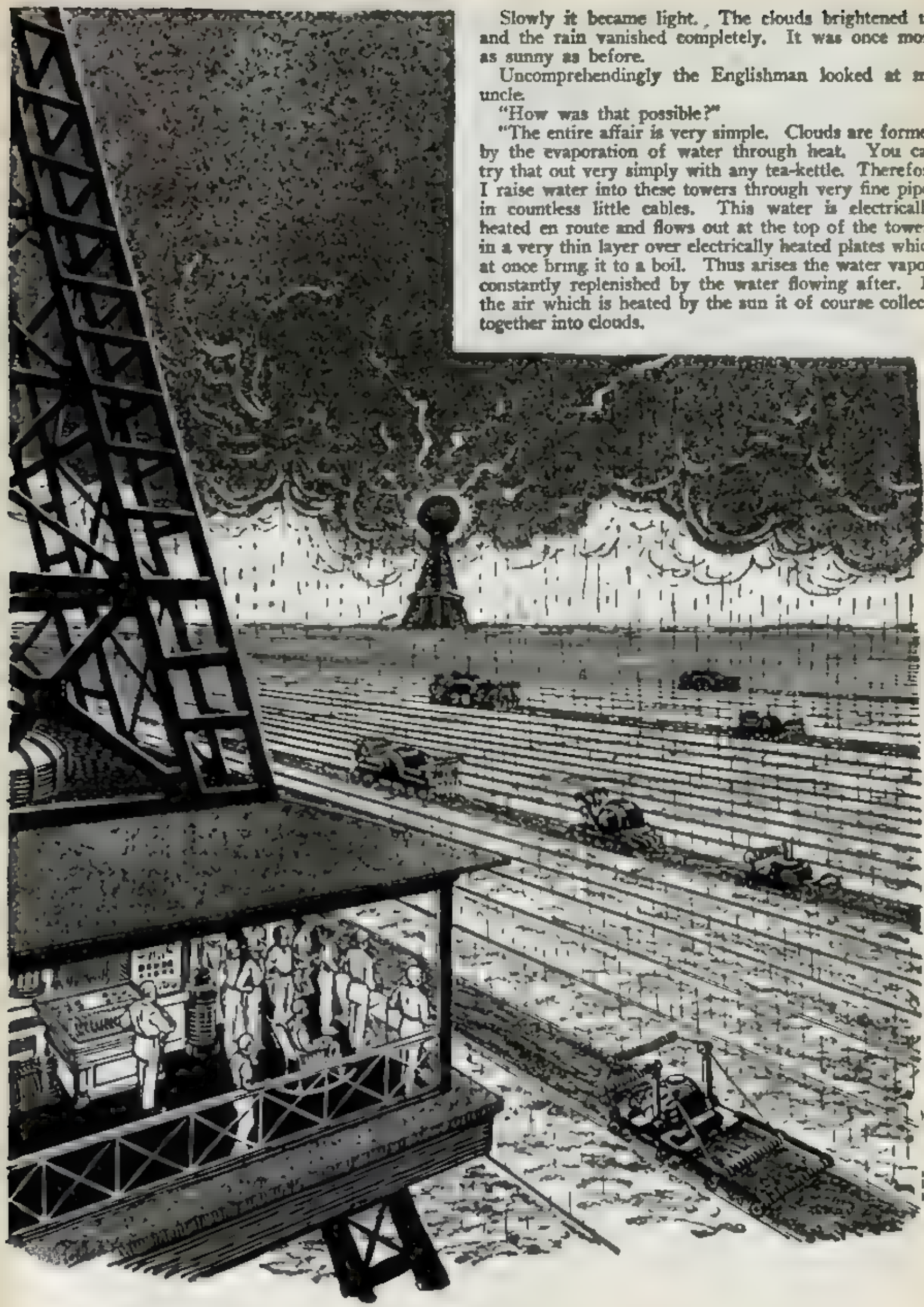
WE all looked at the towers. All four were now crowned with very small white clouds. From minute to minute these clouds grew larger, turning darker and spreading out on all sides. Great shreds of clouds, which were by now black rainclouds, stretched out over the open place. Strangely enough, they did not all go in the same direction but all went toward the centre, being evenly distributed over the circle spanned by our network of tracks. The four towers themselves always seemed sunlit, and they continually had new clouds forming over them, first light colored, then becoming darker.

A half-hour passed, then a whole hour, while we all watched breathlessly. The whole sky was black with clouds.

"Will you permit me to make it rain now?"

No one replied, and my uncle fingered other switches. There were flashes of lightning, and thunder rolled above us. At the same moment the rain poured down, splashing on the dry ground, spattering in our faces, rebounding from the earth in pearly drops. Involuntarily the lord drew his coat closer, and my uncle smiled.

"It was a good thing after all, your lordship, that I had this platform covered with a roof. You thought it was only for the sun, but I made it for the rain. Just be patient a bit. I have shut off the towers. I shall make it rain again during the night, and to-day we shall have a kind of gala performance."



Slowly it became light. The clouds brightened up and the rain vanished completely. It was once more as sunny as before.

Uncomprehendingly the Englishman looked at my uncle.

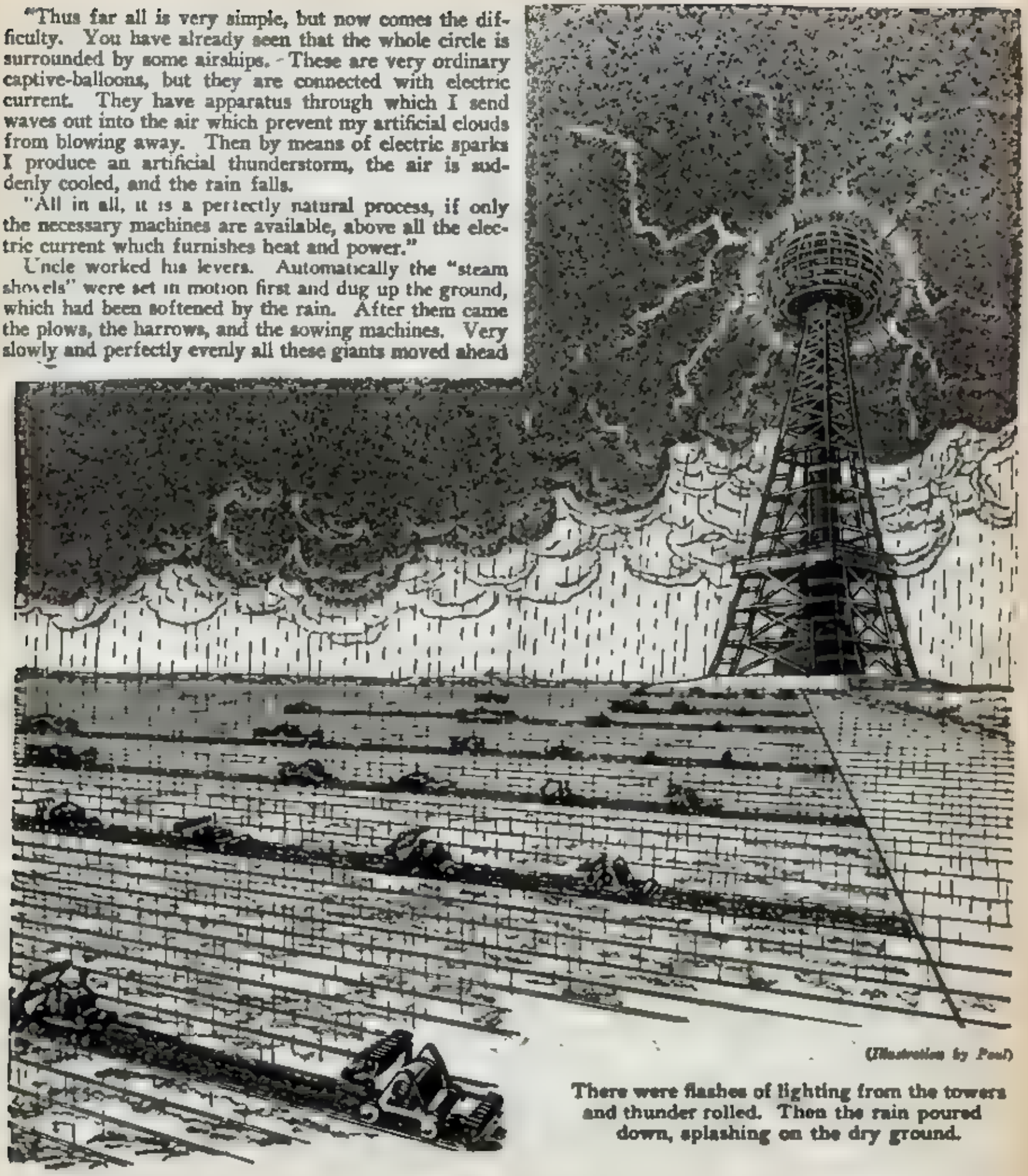
"How was that possible?"

"The entire affair is very simple. Clouds are formed by the evaporation of water through heat. You can try that out very simply with any tea-kettle. Therefore I raise water into these towers through very fine pipes in countless little cables. This water is electrically heated en route and flows out at the top of the towers in a very thin layer over electrically heated plates which at once bring it to a boil. Thus arises the water vapor, constantly replenished by the water flowing after. In the air which is heated by the sun it of course collects together into clouds.

"Thus far all is very simple, but now comes the difficulty. You have already seen that the whole circle is surrounded by some airships. These are very ordinary captive-balloons, but they are connected with electric current. They have apparatus through which I send waves out into the air which prevent my artificial clouds from blowing away. Then by means of electric sparks I produce an artificial thunderstorm, the air is suddenly cooled, and the rain falls.

"All in all, it is a perfectly natural process, if only the necessary machines are available, above all the electric current which furnishes heat and power."

Uncle worked his levers. Automatically the "steam shovels" were set in motion first and dug up the ground, which had been softened by the rain. After them came the plows, the harrows, and the sowing machines. Very slowly and perfectly evenly all these giants moved ahead on all the tracks, digging, plowing, harrowing, and sowing.



(Illustration by Paul)

There were flashes of lighting from the towers and thunder rolled. Then the rain poured down, splashing on the dry ground.

"When the machines reach the outer circuit, the tracks will move sideways, just as used to be done in the construction of the Panama Canal, by the amount of a track-breadth. Then the apparatus comes back again the same way. Thus the entire district will gradually be cultivated. No human hand is necessary except that of the one who stands here on the platform in the centre and controls the whole operation. Even this man will no longer be necessary in the future. My nephew is just now constructing the clockwork which takes his place."

It was late in the evening. For the first time my uncle gave a ceremonial banquet to his guests. It took place in the big new hall of our casino-hotel. It was his wish to keep his Australian guests as long as possible.

Of course there were speeches made at this banquet. It was hard for the emissary of the Australian Commonwealth to have to toast this American, whom he after all would have liked better to have cursed. He was enough of a man of the world to hide his feelings.

"Gentlemen! I bow to the technical miracle which

I have witnessed to-day. You will not think it ill of me if I am still expectant and, as I frankly admit, mistrustful about the further effects of the things which I have seen here.

"Two new cities have arisen in this continent: Canberra, the capital of the great and noble Australian Commonwealth, which I have the honor to represent, and Desert City, the capital, as it were, of the wastes. You will permit me to empty my glass to the welfare, the blooming, and the thriving, and the continued good feeling between these cities."

Rumors of Trouble

MY uncle arose.

"My heartiest thanks, your lordship, for your charming words. And now one thing more. To-day you have come not only to a rebirth of this poor country but also to a baptism. You are quite right in speaking of the might of science. The name 'Desert City,' the city of the wastes, will henceforth be unsuitable for our settlement. Henceforth this city shall be called Electropolis, the city of electricity, the city of science, the city of iron arms which serve mankind, as you quite correctly remarked, noble lord: it is the city of technical wonders.

"May it be a peaceful competition between us: Canberra, the capital of an established state, relying on tradition and supported by a well-tried government, by the power of the British Empire, by all the means which hitherto have seemed necessary and indispensable; and Electropolis, the city of the new ideas, the city of the mind, the capital of a state which will never carry on a war, which has no weapons and is without ambitions save to be an example of unconquerable power to the world, despite its peacefulness—an example of peaceful work, an example of humanity and of the victory of the mind over the low power of brute force.

"I have the honor to repeat the toast of His Excellency the noble Lord Albernoon: I empty my glass to the health of Canberra, the capital of Australia, and Electropolis, the city of science."

The lord and his companions raised their glasses with mingled emotions. Albernoon smiled slightly. He refrained from saying what he thought at this moment: "The man is nothing but a lunatic, after all, lost in fantasies."

On this occasion Uncle Heinrich needed no electrical apparatus to guess the thoughts of the Englishmen. He also smiled, but inwardly he was very joyous.

I left the banquet, for I had much to do at this time. I took my turn at controlling nature; I made it rain for several hours and switch on the apparatus releasing the rays from the little bits of radium up on the poles. Each of these sent the rays over a wide area.

Morning came. Our guests had spent the night in the casino-hotel. The dirigible was ready to take them back to Canberra.

Uncle gave them a pleasant smile. "May I trouble you to go to the platform once more?"

They all stood rigid in amazement and wonder. Over the entire circle was a light green growth. The seeds had come up.

Uncle smiled again. "The tropical sun speeds up growth."

We said nothing about the radium. Lord Albernoon shook his head. "You are a magician," said he.

"I simply seek to make the forces of nature serviceable to me. It is a very small beginning. I should like to live to see my whole territory becoming fertile land in the same way."

Our guests went back again to Canberra by Zeppelin. We again had a sensation, but this was of a very different kind. This time the newspapers gave it to us, in immense headlines.

"The radium mountain in the desert."—"How Lord Albernoon for a few pennies sold countless billions to Mr. Schmidt of San Francisco."—"The German king of Australia."—"Mr. Schmidt's billions which fell from heaven."

It was like that in all the Australian papers. Heaven knows how it got out, but soon the whole world knew the source of our wealth. Even many who were living with us now learned for the first time the secret. Everyone was excited except my uncle.

I was with him. "What will happen?" I asked.

"Nothing at all."

"The Australians are boiling with rage."

"Let them boil."

"What if they attack us?"

"Now you know why I was so insistent on getting the high tension wires for all our rays around the territory."

"Who can have betrayed us?"

"Perhaps the gold-miners, I do not know."

The Australian papers were full of nothing but the radium discovery. Parliament assembled, and the Opposition party was hard at work. Lord Albernoon was summoned back from his leave of absence as quickly as possible.

"I should not want to be in his shoes," says my uncle, calmly going to bed. The rest of us in great excitement stood around the loud speaker in the big hall of the casino, to hear the course of the session of Parliament.

CHAPTER XIII

"Cancel the Agreement!"

THERE was an extremely stormy session in the Parliament at Canberra. The Opposition could not be quieted.

"It was an incredible piece of folly."

"We ask Lord Albernoon whether he has the right to give away the property of Australia."

"We should like to be informed how many millions his lordship personally obtained in this piece of business."

His lordship beat on the table with his fists. "I deprecate such a suspicion. My hands are clean."

"Then your lordship was not even businesslike on your own behalf?"

Their voices became more and more excited. There had never been such an uproar in the Australian Parliament. In vain the president used his gavel in an effort to obtain quiet. At length the leader of the Opposition won a hearing for himself by means of his mighty voice.

"We insist that Lord Albernoon be instructed to cancel the agreement with Mr. Schmidt under any circumstances. Let the latter along with his friends and co-workers be deported as troublesome aliens. We insist that his lordship be given a week for carrying this out."

An unheard-of thing happened: for the first time since the origin of this Parliament a motion of the Opposition was carried by the unanimous vote of all the members.

Lord Albernoon was pale but perfectly calm. "Of course I obey the vote of this honorable house. But I

demand that I be given in advance absolute authority to adopt any means that seems necessary."

"Any at all!"

Lord Albernoon again glanced over the assemblage, took his brief case, beckoned to Harry Spencer, his secretary, and left the government building.

An hour later the prime minister Lord Albernoon was in his office, ready to go on a trip. Before him stood Harry Spencer.

"Is the plane ready?"

"Yes, your lordship."

"How long a trip is it to Electropolis?"

"About sixteen hours; it is about two thousand kilometers."

"It is now six o'clock. We shall travel through the night and be on the spot at ten in the morning. Will you arrange to have our coming announced?"

"I have already ventured to do that."

The lord put his hand on his secretary's shoulder.

"This is the hardest step I have ever taken."

The secretary shrugged his shoulders.

"A German engineer and you—the most skilful diplomat whom Australia has had in many decades."

"I wish you were right."

He sighed heavily as they entered the cabin of the plane.

For almost a week I had been working from morning until late at night on the great clockwork which was to become the heart of our agricultural establishment, so to speak, the general control of all our machines. This entire week I had hardly come up to the world above. I had even taken my meals in my laboratory.

Now Uncle Henrich came in. I had not seen him during the week, since he had been busy with other tasks. This day he seemed to me especially gay.

"Finish up for to-day, lad!"

"I cannot, uncle; I have perhaps two days more to work, and then we can start to operate it."

"It will just be a day later, that is all."

I was amazed. Uncle Heinrich, who found every moment so precious, was himself putting it off!

"What has happened?"

He laughed heartily. "I am going to have you attend a theatrical performance."

I was surprised beyond measure. "A theatrical performance?"

"It is a pity that you were not with me yesterday afternoon. I enjoyed the radio very much."

At that I began to feel a bit anxious, but my uncle read my glance.

"No, lad, I am not a bit ill. My fun with the radio is actually just as serious a matter as the enjoyable performance which I shall show you to-day. The truth is no more nor less than that very shortly Lord Albernoon, the Australian Prime Minister and Plenipotentiary, will arrive here and in person will presumably declare war on us under the instructions of his government."

"I Caused the Fall!"

NOW I was really startled. "War?"

"That is all right, it will not endanger us at all."

He stepped to the table where my work was set up and calmly absorbed himself in what I had been doing.

"Very good," said he. "I think you understood perfectly what I want."

There was a sharp ring of a bell, and my uncle took my arm.

"Now come," he said.

At once we were in his office, looking at the ground glass screen, on which a message appeared in German: "Australian plane just passed—Musgrave Range Outpost."

I reflected a moment. "It is about three hundred kilometers from here to the Musgrave Range. They will therefore be here at about ten."

Uncle smiled strangely. "I think they will be an hour or two late. We shall have plenty of time to make a close inspection of your work."

He sat down at the telegraph. The words which he sent out appeared in writing on the ground glass. "Have auto ready. Go to aid of plane. Bring occupants at once to me. Schmidt."

I could not understand. "Surely the plane is not wrecked is it?"

"Not yet, but apparently it will be in an hour. Now come to your clockwork."

From his expression I could see that he did not wish to be questioned.

With the greatest calmness he spent an hour testing my work, suggesting an improvement here and there, praising other points, until at length he looked at his watch and stood up.

"Will you come with me to the engine room?"

Mr. Holborn was already waiting for us. His face was just as odd as uncle's.

"All ready?"

"Yes, Mr. Schmidt."

Uncle stepped to a great switchboard and busied himself at it. Meanwhile the light in the room went out, while it was replaced by a brilliant illumination of a ground glass screen over the switchboard.

I saw a plane slowly crossing the sky. It moved slowly because such a great expanse of sky was visible. I could hear uncle continually working the switches, while the plane slipped into a spin and landed on the earth. Shortly afterward a cloud of smoke became visible. Then the engine room was lighted up again, and nothing could be seen on the screen.

At the same moment the signal bell rang again and we returned to uncle's study. Again there was a message on the great screen of ground glass. "Australian plane just fallen and burned. Occupants unhurt. Rescue car from Musgrave Range already on spot. Arriving Electropolis as quickly as possible. Lady Edith Lagoon Post."

I looked at uncle in horror. "Then you knew beforehand that the plane would fall?"

"Of course, since I myself with the aid of the Rindell-Matthews rays caused the fall, or rather the forced glide, and the subsequent fire."

"But why?"

"Simply to provide his lordship with the pleasure of a little auto ride in the blazing sun."

"But uncle!"

"Not from maliciousness. There is a very important reason, which you will learn later."

We went back to work, and uncle seemed to be thinking of nothing but my clockwork mechanism.

At eleven-thirty the bell rang again. "Australian auto passed Holborn plant."

Uncle jumped up. "They will be here in twenty minutes, and I must change my clothes. We cannot receive an English peer in a working jacket. You change yours, too."

A Serious Conference

IN half an hour we were standing up by the sheet iron shack, waiting for the approaching auto. It was an open car with no top, and the lord and Mr. Spencer looked completely fagged out. My uncle bowed deeply.

"How do you do, your lordship?"

The minister tried to smile.

"We are roasted. The devil only knows what suddenly went wrong with the plane. I am grateful to you, Mr. Schmidt, for having your auto come so quickly to our rescue."

Uncle smiled cordially.

"May I first offer your lordship a cool bath?"

"A noble idea."

"I have also ventured to put out fresh linen for your lordship. Of course it has never been worn. I suspect—"

Now the lord actually smiled. "You are a most attentive host. Since I planned to stay only an hour, I have not even a suitcase with me."

Our two servants, this time in formal livery, conducted the lord and his secretary into the two lavatories prepared for them, and we went back to uncle's room. I had never seen him so much pleased as now.

Half an hour passed. Uncle was standing before his desk, I before the secretarial table in the background, as the two servants brought in the lord and his secretary. In the new tropical suits and refreshed by their baths, they were again very cheerful.

"Permit me, Mr. Schmidt, to introduce the First Secretary of the Australian Foreign Office, Mr. Spencer."

In exactly the same tone Uncle Heinrich replied, "Your lordship will permit me to introduce my nephew, the First Secretary of my domain."

The lord and Mr. Spencer seated themselves in the armchairs, we sat down at our desks, and uncle opened the conversation.

"Has your lordship been so kind as to bring me in person the receipt for the complete payment which I have made ahead of time?"

The lord made a perfectly evident effort and said, "On the contrary, I have been instructed by the Australian government to place again at your disposal not only this final payment but also all your previous payments and to declare the agreement with you as void. I have the money with me, and Mr. Spencer will be kind enough to—"

Uncle again smiled very cordially. "Then I am doubly happy," said he, "that you did not come to grief in the plane—all that money!"

The lord looked at Uncle in amazement. Again he started to speak, and now began the strangest conversation, perhaps, which I have ever witnessed. That is to say, only my uncle did any actual speaking. The lord and the secretary only made timid attempts, from time to time, to interrupt him. The less they succeeded in this, the longer he talked, and the more horrified they looked.

"Your lordship wishes to explain to me this sudden change in the views of the Australian Parliament. Is your lordship seeking words? That is not necessary; we are human beings, you and I."

"Therefore if I—"

"No, my lord," said uncle, becoming serious. "The agreement was not based on any false pretences. Rather, you were extremely glad when I offered you the vast sum for the worthless desert."

"You should have—"

"I did. I bought Mt. Russell from you, outright."

"But—"

"Yes indeed, it is perfectly clearly stated. Look at the agreement. The mountain just as it is. The mountain with the air above it and the earth beneath it. Even mining rights are mentioned in the agreement, though that was not at all necessary."

"We—"

Uncle leaned back comfortably and laughed. "Yes, my dear sir, if you did not know what treasures the mountain contained, that is really not my fault. To the best of my knowledge, an English captain named Arthur Philip founded a colony in Australia as long ago as 1787. From this later on the Australian Commonwealth developed. The English have never once left the country since. And so you had over one hundred and fifty years to learn what treasures your country contained. It is not my fault if you did not do this, and I am not responsible for it, I who came here only a few years ago, being nothing but a simple hunter of birds of paradise, yet learning more about your country than you yourselves, and finding that ancient mine."

"It was your duty—"

"No, your lordship, it was not my duty. I came to you and asked you the price of Mt. Russell with everything on it and in it. You set a price, certainly a price which was ridiculously high for a simple heap of rock in the desert."

"I—"

"Quite right, you thought I was a crazy American whom you could fool."

A Final Word

WHILE I sat there with open mouth, my uncle seeming to me in this hour just like a demon, a supernatural being, and while Mr. Spencer wore a look of absolute horror, Albernoon sprang up. I had perceived that he was losing his composure more and more with every sentence my uncle spoke. Now his nerves were completely out of his control. He almost shrieked, "Sir, how dare you claim to read my thoughts!"

Uncle had also got up. Smiling very ironically, he said, "Have I perhaps been wrong? Have I not read every one of your thoughts. Have I not given you an exact answer to every question, before you asked it?"

"I—"

"You know that I have been right, and perhaps you will now concede that a German is not so stupid as an English peer assumes."

The lord did not reply, and my uncle went on, "As to the rest, even if you were right, even if you could show me a clause in your laws stating that an English Parliament is not justified in disposing thus of Australia's mineral wealth, even then you would be wrong. I purchased Mt. Russell from you, purchased it legally, but Mt. Russell is not a part of Australia."

"Excuse me, sir—"

"No, it is not a part of Australia. It is a meteor, a vast meteor, which probably fell here from some disintegrated planet. To call things by their right names: does the soil of Australia perhaps contain radium? Not that you or I have ever heard. The radium I found in a great meteoric rock, which I purchased 'as is,' with everything in and on it, explicitly stated so. You have absolutely no claim to make on me, and I regret that I must insist on my contract. If you withhold from me the receipt of Parliament, I shall just have to content myself with the fact that I have paid, which my bank

has confirmed to me, and therewith this affair is settled for me."

In exhaustion the lord fell back again into his chair and my uncle also sat down. Fortunately uncle had switched off the device which rolled back the chair as soon as the guest arose. It would have been somewhat damaging to the dignity of the Prime Minister to have sat down on the floor, which he certainly would have done, if the chair had disappeared in the interim.

While the lord was seeking for ideas, my uncle also was silent. He took from his desk a box of genuine Havana cigars and offered it to the lord.

"I think it is purposeless for us to get excited. You know that I am right. You are much too clever and straightforward a man not to feel it yourself. I understand perfectly. The Australian government is dissatisfied with you. The affair was all right, when your representatives were convinced that I was the loser.

"I imagine that at that time they gave extraordinary praise to yourself and your cleverness. Now things are unfortunately different. I mean unfortunately with respect to you. Now it has turned out that I was the cleverer one, and now it is up to you to straighten matters out again.

"You are to do this by any means, any at all. By dishonest means, if need be. No, Lord Albernoon, you are not the man for that. All your life you have gone straight ahead, and this trip was very, very hard for you, because you knew beforehand that I was in the right. To speak frankly, I am sorry for you, my lord."

CHAPTER XIV

Banished!

ALBERNOON was about to start from his chair, but uncle raised his hand.

"You need not be offended. You know that I mean it honestly. I will tell you something. You shall not have come to no purpose. I will freely pay ten millions more, which is, I think, no bad price for a trip from Canberra here. Besides, I shall of course pay for your plane, which I destroyed.

The lord jumped up again. "Which you—"

"Certainly. And in fact by an English invention. By the Rindell-Matthews rays, which are at my disposal here in any desired amount, because of my great subterranean power plant."

"But why?"

"Because I wanted to show you something about the possibilities which I have prepared."

After walking up and down a few times nervously, the lord sat down again.

I saw a plane crossing the sky and heard uncle working the switches. Then the plane slipped into a spin.

(Illustration by Paul)

"Your lordship, I think we shall part good friends after all. We have been talking a long time. I have been most inhospitable. You have travelled far, and lunch time is past. That is right, it is being served now. Probably the bell will ring in a second."

He turned a switch, and it became dark in the room. Then a strange humming commenced, and I saw something that made my hair stand.

We were separated from the part of the grotto which served as a dining room by a metal wall hung with tapestry. Now I could suddenly see through this wall. It looked like a sort of gelatine.

I saw the dining room and the two servants in it, in outline, and then I saw through the next wall also, into the engine room. Everything was transparent and in outline. A remarkably reddish fluorescence filled the entire room while this was going on.

All this lasted only a moment. Then uncle switched on the light again, and I saw that the two gentlemen had faces just as horrified as mine.

"What was that?"

The minister had his hands pressed to his temples. He was evidently doubting his sanity. My uncle smiled again.

"Nothing supernatural, gentlemen, absolutely nothing supernatural. There is nothing supernatural in the world. You will pardon me for having given you a little electrical exposition of your own to make up for your useless journey. If first I had to show you the invention of one of your countrymen, still what you just saw was the discovery of a German: the gamma rays, which certainly make it possible to look through almost all solid bodies.

"My dear Lord Albernoon, I really think you would do best to be friendly with me. I have all sorts of other little hidden things and powers—"

He stopped and said in another tone, "But now I may surely invite you to eat something."

I looked at the lord, who showed that he was in no wise convinced that all these happenings were in accord with the laws of nature. He pulled himself together and made a mighty effort to speak.

"I regret that I think I have not the right to eat anything in this house."

Uncle replied promptly, "That is too bad, for the food is good."

"Then you refuse to give up your contract?"

"Of course I refuse."

"You will not take back your money?"

"I have no idea of doing so."

"You are going to carry out your plans further?"

"I cannot imagine why else I should have conceived them."

"You imagine that you can convert this desert into fertile land?"

"No."

"You do not?"

"I do not imagine that I can; I know it."

"And what will be done with this land?"

"It will make happy people of many immigrants."

"Immigrants coming from what country?"

"From Germany, of course. And it will also export an extraordinary amount of wealth."

"Whither, sir?"

"To Germany, if you do not object."

"Man, are you planning to found a sort of German colony in Australia?"

"If you call it so."

"I forbid you."

"With what right?"

"In the name of Parliament. I banish you as an undesirable alien. As to whether I can render your contract null and void, the courts will decide. But you yourself I banish."

"Then It Is War!

"WELL."

"You and your friends have three days to leave the country."

"Well?"

"Did you understand me?"

"Certainly."

"And will you obey my order?"

"No."

"And why not?"

"Because on principle I obey no orders, and moreover because here I am on my own territory. Your lordship, please be so kind as to consider that I am the owner here and that I am extremely patient to let anyone address me thus."

"Then you refuse?"

"How often must I repeat it?"

"Then I shall compel you."

Uncle made up a very ironical face and smiled pleasantly.

"Would your lordship be kind enough to tell me how you will compel me?"

"In case of need, with my soldiers."

"They are not here but in your cities."

"I shall send them here, a whole regiment, if necessary."

"You can do that; you can even call upon the entire Australian army."

"Will you perhaps resist them?

"No."

"Very well then."

"If I wanted to resist them they would first have to be here."

"That will not take long."

"Not so."

"Sir, you make me nervous."

"It cannot happen at all."

"Why, if I may ask?"

"I ventured to give your lordship a little demonstration of the possibilities at my disposal.

"I am sure that your lordship had a very good plane and probably you selected a very skilful flier. When I thought it well to force you to land, I merely turned a switch and sent out toward you those rays of which we were speaking previously. Your lordship, were you not compelled to obey my command, and when I wished, did not your beautiful plane catch fire?

"I have already told you that I am ready to pay for it. That is a side-issue. I now regard it as my duty to say to you: Leave your soldiers at home. I am no advocate of bloody wars. I do not like to kill people, but I tell you this: Against my will no person and no plane will cross the border of the territory which I legally purchased from you. I tell you this in all seriousness. In case you disregard my warning, I should be very sorry if through your fault—do you hear, through your fault, not through mine—Australians, whom I should be glad to regard as friends, should lose their lives."

"That is all nonsense."

"Perhaps. Then probably it was also nonsense that your plane fell, that your pilot lost all control of it, and that it finally burned up."

The two gentlemen stood facing each other. The lord said curtly and harshly, "Then you want war?"

"No, I want peace and justice."

"We shall see. Farewell."

"Till we meet again, your lordship, till we meet again."

"We shall never meet again."

He turned away and went, accompanied by Spencer, through the automatically opening door. The servant opened the door of the electric car, and it went off.

Uncle turned to me with a smile. "Well, my boy?"

"Uncle, you are the most powerful person on earth."

"Nonsense, I simply know what I want and what I can do. There was a time when these Australian gentlemen thought they could treat us as they liked. It will not hurt them to learn the contrary."

"Now he is your bitterest enemy. He is gone."

Uncle Heinrich laughed loudly. "Just wait, here comes the epilogue of the play."

The whistle sounded, as it did every time the car left or came back, the door opened, and the servant entered the room.

"His lordship wishes to see Mr. Schmidt."

"With the greatest of pleasure. Come, Fritz."

We rode up and saw his lordship standing with a very red face by the sheet iron shack.

Uncle greeted him politely but with a touch of irony. "Was I not right in saying, 'Until we meet again'?"

The lord said angrily, "How am I to go away, if I have neither a plane nor an auto?"

"But your lordship left so positively and stormily that—"

The Australian made an effort; I could see how hard it was for him to say it. "I must ask you to lend me a conveyance."

"With pleasure!"

Uncle worked some electric switches, and in a few moments a brand new plane glided up.

"May I request your lordship to accept this plane to take the place of the one burned?"

"I accept nothing of you. Have me taken to the frontier."

"I am sorry, but my pilot has no time. You have yours. The plane is your property."

The Australian said no more, got into the cabin, along with his secretary, the door was closed, the pilot took his seat, and the wheels ran over the sand. The great bird rose into the air rapidly, and uncle looked after it laughing.

"I think that of all that happened to him to-day, the hardest thing was to have to ask me for the plane. Now come to dinner. I think we can eat with better appetites than he. I should not like to be in his shoes when he returns to Canberra and has to report in Parliament how things went with him here."

The Great Secret

IT was evening, by the time we had eaten. The talk with the lord had lasted for hours. We were again in uncle's room.

"Will you allow me a question?" I said timidly.

"Speak!"

"I should not like to think you a magician."

"Nor am I one."

"How was it possible for you to know beforehand every thought of the lord and every one of his objections?"

Uncle was silent for a moment in thought, and then he turned to me.

"It is right, I must tell you everything. My boy, this is the greatest secret which I possess. Only you shall know it, because you are blood of my blood and I love you. But you must give me your word of honor that you will keep this secret. Perhaps I shall request of you to destroy it after my death and bury it for ever."

He spoke so seriously that I was embarrassed.

"What frightful secret is this?"

"I understand how to read people's thoughts."

"Uncle!"

"That is nothing remarkable. It is merely a very natural advance in already existing knowledge.

"You know about radio. You know that every sound, that the slightest movement by the sound of the softest voice, produces waves which are propagated in the air and in the ether. Likewise every other activity produces such waves, naturally also the operation of thought by the human brain.

"Extremely high electrical power, such as I have at my disposal through my machines, such power as puts at my disposal the gamma rays and the Rindell-Matthews rays, can so amplify these tiny waves that they vibrate an equally infinitely sensitive diaphragm.

"To be sure, it is necessary that the person whose thoughts I wish to read and I along with my apparatus be in very close contact. Therefore I have had shirts made in the fabric of which are spun very fine wires of a new metal, and just such wires must be spun into the suit. If now the undershirt lies against the back and the shirt and suit against the undershirt and the suit is in contact with the back of the chair, which contains inside it the apparatus with the necessary tubes and appliances, while this chair is connected with my chair by a wire, while I wear on my body the same clothing which conducts the waves, then those waves are conducted to me.

"You know that a person does not hear only with his ears. The auditory waves are also transmitted through the bones, so that a deaf person can under certain circumstances hear through his teeth. And so it is sufficient to have the diaphragm rest firmly against my spine. I am then able to hear these vibrations of the other person's brain via my spinal cord just like the spoken word.

"It could be managed more simply by means of headphones, but as I have these two chairs equipped, I am in a position to read the thoughts of any person sitting on that chair, without his perceiving it.

"That is why I desire of each person who comes to me to wear the linen and the suit which I have had put out for him, just as I did with you.

"That is why I had to destroy the plane of the Australians and force them to use the auto in the heat. That was the only way I could make Lord Albernoon bathe and put on the linen which was woven with those metal wires."

He pressed my hand. "That is how I first guessed your thoughts. Forgive me, my boy. It is an invasion of human rights which I have found necessary to take on myself. I shall never use this for any other purpose than to protect my work from destruction and to take into my circle only such persons as have pure thoughts.

"It is a frightful weapon in the hands of mankind, and therefore I am not willing to bear the responsibility for making it public, although I am convinced that this discovery will be made elsewhere, sooner or later. You will give me your word of honor that you will tell no one of it, and you will not make me regret confiding in

you something which I have never confided in anyone else!"

"My word of honor, uncle!"

He pressed my hand firmly, and we looked at each other long and earnestly. Never in all these weeks was I so convinced of the greatness and purity of this man, and never had I been so proud of his complete confidence in me, as in this hour. For a long time we sat there in silence. I was reflecting. What a discovery that was! What an incredible power! Silent transference of human thought!

"Uncle, then a time will come when anyone perhaps will carry with him a little transmitter and a little receiver, a time when any two people can communicate together."

"Not any two. Only two persons whose wavelengths are set for each other. The others will apparently always be limited to such an apparatus as I have here, to a diaphragm and coils which equalize the wavelengths.

"Still, what you say is true to-day, without our knowing or suspecting it. Is it not strange that thousands of persons pass by one another without heeding it, and then suddenly two meet and feel that they belong to each other? It may be man and woman, or it may be two friends who feel in perfect relation. Perhaps this may be explained. Perhaps they are two persons who from the first were tuned to the same wavelength."

It was a fine cool evening. My uncle sat at his papers, but I lay up in the sand and thought over all the riddles of humanity, the solutions of which still lie in the future.

CHAPTER XV

War!

THE war had begun. That is to say, we heard of its preparations listening to Australian news over the radio. In fact, one of the engineers was now on duty listening in continually.

The army was mobilized. A whole fleet of airplanes was called to duty. We had our outpost planes everywhere in the air, and our electric power plants, of which we now had four, were at all times providing high power current.

Uncle was unhappy. "Why are they doing that? If the people were reasonable, they would see on the face of things that it is impossible to conquer us. Why more sacrifices of human life?"

"They believe that with a few squadrons of planes they can so bomb our few settlements with shells and poison gas that in a few hours all will be over."

"They are mistaken. Nevertheless, I do not like to give orders to block the frontier everywhere with our powerful rays. That is a hazardous game, too, playing such forces. For we cannot fully guarantee the frightful effects of them.

"When I showed the Australians the effect of the gamma rays, not as a game but as a warning example, even then I was aware of the danger. The fact that a tension of at least two hundred and fifty thousand volts must be produced merely to obtain rays having a wavelength of barely half a meter, is astonishing.

"To be sure, this slight range has its good point. It makes it possible for us to erect a dividing wall in the air, before which and behind which there is no danger.

"But our own machines! We are like would-be magicians, working with weapons we hardly know, and it is possible that we shall ourselves be destroyed by them.

"Certainly much more dangerous rays shoot about in space. Who knows—all the universe is nothing but a struggle. We strive to fly into space in rocket ships, seeking by all imaginable means to establish connections with Mars, yet we do not even know whether it is inhabited or has become a mass of eternal ice. We cannot see with our telescopes. But—who knows whether the inhabitants of other worlds have not other means, whether they are not striving for the earth, as we for the stars! Who knows whether the many rays which are strange to us but fearful in their effect are not perhaps a sort of bombardment from other planets! I refer to the Millikan rays, named after their discoverer, which infinitely surpass the gamma rays and penetrate through two meters of lead with ease.

"If these rays which shoot across the universe reached our earth directly, in a few seconds all life would be destroyed by them. But fortunately they are of such a nature that they are at once lost, as soon as they encounter a resistance, even if no more than the atmosphere of the earth. That is why we have only our little wall in the air!"

I was enroute with my uncle. We crossed our territory. Nine-tenths of it is still desert. Therefore we put our protective wall about only that portion of our land which was already under cultivation.

"How slowly our work proceeds," said uncle.

"Why don't we cut great canals through the border mountains and create a sea in the middle? There was formerly such an inland sea in Australia."

Uncle nodded. "There used to be. But it is not merely that the deposits of the rivers of that time raised up the border mountains, the interior also has risen. It is above sea level and cannot be flooded."

We were high up in a plane, just uncle and I. We have an extremely delicate radio set on board and high-power current in specially made storage batteries, so that we transmit messages with ease. We also have keen telescopes, likewise a receiving set which brings us the most minute vibrations.

We were justified in assuming that on this very day the decisive step of the Australians against us would be carried out. Our protected territory is still so small that although we cannot see all over it from this point, we can nevertheless hear over it with our electric "radio" ears. The enemy might do to the desert stretches just what he liked.

We had agreed with our central station on a special secret code, a completely altered Morse alphabet. Our enemies are clever, and we do not wish them to understand our signals.

I heard sounds in my head phones. Uncle was managing the transmitter. We floated almost motionless in the still air, like a huge eagle.

"They are coming!"

"Where?"

"From the south."

In the conversation that we had overheard the day before they had spoken of an attack from the east. That had seemed strange to us. Why should they endanger Mt. Russell and the radium deposit? Besides that, they knew that we had a protective wall of rays there.

It was not long before I already could hear the noise of the motors of the air fleet, which was still hundreds of kilometers away. It is splendid to have so delicate a microphone.

Uncle nodded to me. "We shall go to meet them."

We held our course straight to the south, moving along at a high speed.

The Barrier

AN hour had passed. We were now perhaps half a kilometer from our frontier protection. We now came closer very slowly, approaching it within one hundred meters. And then we saw the hostile air fleet.

It was really a splendid sight. They were bold and enterprising men, these Australians. They meant to overwhelm us and finish matters at a single blow. There were at least one hundred and fifty planes speeding along in squadron formation. There were brave men piloting those planes. We had listened on the radio to what the minister of war said to them. They do not underestimate our scientific power.

Now our adversaries saw us. They saw us and were startled. They were at any rate more startled by this single plane than they would have been by an immense fleet of planes. For a moment the Australians hesitated.

It was really a beautiful sight, these hundred and fifty perfectly uniform planes, twenty-five to a squadron, headed toward us. In the centre, probably serving as the military headquarters in this new type of battle, was a great dirigible. They were all some eight hundred meters in the air.

Evidently an order was given, for the planes set out toward us. For an instant I looked at uncle. I must admit that I felt somewhat uneasy. But now I saw uncle rise up, his face a bit flushed, his eyes shining, and a smile of contentment on his face.

It was not for nothing that Uncle Heinrich in all these years had become half an American. He was an enthusiastic sportsman. "Do they not look splendid?" he said. "How fine they are, with the sun shining on their wings and their bright metal fuselages!"

I marvelled at this and could not help thinking of a story I had once read. A man had been attacked by a lion in the jungles of Africa. The lion stood over him with his paw raised to strike the deadly blow. From its open mouth the saliva dripped on the man's face. Although he was paralyzed by the fearful certainty of death, his only thought at the moment was: what a beautiful head the lion has!

But as uncle looked at the advancing planes, there was surely no fear of death in his mind. We heard the noise of the many motors and saw the six squadrons shooting toward us at high speed. There was still a minute before they could reach us, and then we would surely be lost. Ridiculous as it may sound, I involuntarily clutched my revolver. And then the miracle occurred.

No plane took fire, but none reached us. It was just as though there were a glass wall between them and us. The planes stopped and hovered there. We could see clearly without using field glasses how the pilots were working frantically at their controls, but it did them no good.

The controls no longer obeyed them. The armatures of their apparatus had become subject to our powerful current. The planes made a turn, and although the pilots worked like mad, the six squadrons went back to the dirigible, broadside on. Uncle laughed so loudly that it could be heard above the noise of the engines, startling me greatly. His years in the bush and his life with the savages had made a mark on him. Anyone who did not know what was going on here would have thought a man who stood up and laughed in a plane eight hundred meters above the earth surely insane.

In the Australian ranks a council of war was being held. Then the fleet came back slowly in a single line. As yet they had not made out what was going on. Probably they imagined this uncanny power that so rudely checked their victorious course came from our harmless little plane. They opened fire on us. From a hundred and fifty planes a storm of bullets came toward us in quick succession, with deafening crashes. Now I felt like a soldier of the middle ages whom the devil has made proof against his enemy. The rain of shots seemed to die away close before us on the invisible wall. They did not rebound but instead changed into a lively pyrotechnic display. Once the bullets entered the vicinity of our fearful wall of rays, they flamed up, the drops of molten metal turning to gas and burning.

Yonder there was rage and indecision. We almost imagined we heard their words and saw their faces trembling with wrath. These men were no cowards; they were rash to the point of folly. A single plane came forward. It sped along with all the power of its motor, straight ahead, the pilot not touching the rudder.

The force of the impetus overcame the power of our rays to turn the plane away. I wondered whether the current had failed for a moment. The Australian pilot gave a cry of victory, waved his hand to the others, and started to fire his machine gun. Then right before us was a single brilliant flame.

In simply a second man and plane, machine gun and hand grenades, all had vanished. They had not fallen; they had simply melted, been turned to gas, and burned up.

Uncle's face was now pale. He shrugged his shoulders angrily. "It is not my fault. I warned them. I did not want to destroy a single human life. They are fools if they will not listen."

The Bombardment

THE bloodless battle lasted all day. The hostile squadrons climbed higher. We followed them. We had everything with us, even warm overcoats and oxygen apparatus.

They climbed up and up, already half fainting from lack of air as they tried again and again to pierce our wall, in vain. Our wall seemed to reach up into the very emptiness of space.

The fleet of planes finally turned and sped to the south. Uncle nodded with satisfaction.

"They have become reasonable. At least they lost only one plane and two men."

It was now evening, and we were flying very low. Here comes the sudden evening of the tropics, directly after the setting of the sun, with no twilight to soften the change. We were enjoying a peculiar colossal display of fireworks. The Australian general was doing his duty. Now that the fleet of planes had failed, he was trying to settle matters with his long distance guns.

It was pretty to see the heavy bombs and shells burst on our wall of rays, melting, becoming gas, and dying a fiery death. Then there was another sight—misty shadows which crept up as far as the rays and then flashed up in bright flames.

"Those are poison gases. It is a pity that many a poor kangaroo will suffer from them."

I looked at him. "Uncle, is this the end of war for the world?"

"Perhaps, but I do not believe so. If only reasonable and thoughtful persons were to use these rays, as we do, for protection and defence, yes. Woe to him who uses these rays for attack! In a few days he could destroy the whole world and himself as well."

We had only one weak point. This was Allister City on Cambridge Gulf. I was surprised when in the middle

of the night I returned to Electropolis with uncle. All our Zeppelins and planes were on the way to or from there. Likewise all our chain-roads which led north were dragging along countless cars, all the camels and elephants were en route, and not far from Electropolis two hundred Chinese were busily engaged in unloading planes, airships, and cars. They were piling up mountains of goods.

"What is going on here?"

"Allister City is moving."

"But why?"

"I am giving up the harbor. It is too much exposed. I want to put the wall of rays a bit inland. The sea with its mighty surface of water diverges it. Recently a ship going along caught fire. The waves of the sea conduct the rays too well. Besides, the harbor is only leased, and why should I fight about it with the gentlemen from Canberra? I do not need it."

"You do not?"

"In the beginning I did, but now we have our great Zeppelins. Where our wall of rays is to run, I have set up great transmitters to warn the ships. But we must act quickly."

"I have just had word that the Australian warships are already on the way. Probably early tomorrow Allister City will be within the range of their guns. Let them bombard it. I do not care about a few sheet iron shacks. I cannot protect it, either, since Wyndham City lies on the same line and belongs to Australia."

There was another battle the next day. Uncle and I again went to be peaceful onlookers. This time Allister and Holborn went in two planes to the other frontiers, to observe matters there. Uncle and I flew to the north and hovered behind the wall of rays, which was now cutting off our domain at a distance of one hundred kilometers from the coast.

The sun had risen and lay over the sea. All was so peaceful. Allister City had been abandoned. Looking down, I saw the bay where I spent the night with Holborn and the little inlet where for the first time I had seen the wonderful lung-fishes climb up into the branches of the trees. There, where now there was a green speck, was the puddle in which the poor black swan got its foot stuck in the mud.

There was a dull sound, out at sea, and the ground was torn up among the sheet iron shacks. An exploding shell hurled quantities of sand and pieces of sheet iron high in the air. Uncle nodded.

"It is well that there are no persons there and nothing of value to us. We certainly must admit that they can shoot. The very first was a direct hit."

Shell after shell struck the ground. After half an hour the entire city district looked like a heap of rubbish. Uncle smiled grimly.

"That is one way to dig up the ground. It works almost better than our plows."

The Retreat

UNFORTUNATELY a few direct hits were on Wyndham City. The Australians were killing their own countrymen. Such a thing was almost inevitable at that distance, and uncle shook his head sadly. Three hours had passed. The bombardment had been over for some time, and the Australian warships were cautiously nearing the shore.

"They seem to be wondering why we let them bombard us without any resistance, not even returning their fire."

It was a stately fleet of great modern warships. Uncle smiled.

"If I wished, I need only give an order. They would merely need to shift one lever over in Electropolis, and all of these ships would be set afire. I do not do so, for I am a man of peace and there is no need of it."

Boats came ashore. At first there was only one. After a careful examination, soldiers were sent out and cannon brought ashore. I wonder how these soldiers felt, these soldiers intoxicated with victory, feeling that they had just given us a severe defeat, that they had now destroyed our only seaport, when they suddenly heard above them in the air a loud warning voice: "Go no further! A hundred paces to the south is certain death! Look out for the electric wall!"

We saw them stop—then we saw them laugh. An officer raised his hand. He was giving commands, though we could not hear his voice. He had seen our plane and knew that the warning voice came from it.

We remained there quietly. The officer was certainly astounded at our madness in offering ourselves as a target. Twenty machine guns flashed, and two marine cannon which had been brought on shore blazed. It was just the same as the day before. The bullets became little dots of fire and were harmless to us, while we calmly floated up there. The soldiers stared at us. The sailors were of course superstitious, as always.

There was a period of calm. The men went back on board. The ships turned their broadsides to us. A mighty cannonade began, the flaming cannon mouths hurling their projectiles at us. There was ten minutes of frightful drumfire. To us it meant nothing but a gigantic display of fireworks. Then the firing ceased, signal flags went up everywhere, and the ships withdrew to the open sea.

Uncle said, "They are still waiting for the attack which never comes. Well, it is over for awhile now."

While we slowly flew back to Electropolis, night came over us. There was a bright full-moon, and I could plainly see my uncle's face beside me. It was perfectly still all about us, and we did not talk. Besides we were too high up to hear the sounds of earth. Below us we saw the long caravans of cars, elephants, and camels, still engaged in taking to Desert City the materials they had saved. They looked like ants as they crawled along, apparently in silence, over the great desert.

In this hour Uncle seemed to me quite powerful, more powerful than ever before. He was like a supernatural being. He held in his hand forces such as no inhabitant of the earth had ever possessed. In two days he repelled the attack of a powerful nation, firing not a shot himself, and purposely avoiding the destruction of a single life.

CHAPTER XVI

Ominous Quiet

UNCLE was planning a trip to San Francisco. I now knew the significance of such trips, which he made frequently. There was feverish activity in our chemical laboratory. In the past few weeks, we had fetched from the mine at Mt. Russell immense amounts of pitchblende and had obtained the radium from it.

Transportation of the radium is managed in large glass jars, with an insulating fabric woven about them. The men wear clothes of that fabric, while their faces are covered by masks with windows for their eyes. They look much like the pest-doctors in the middle ages.

Uncle is careful. One of the jars might get broken.

As yet we do not know what rays might be released, and we want to protect everyone from injury.

We also have a great metal keg in the mine, which can hold about two hundred pounds of the precious stuff.

Uncle had a new side-cave blasted in the rock at the central plant. He intended to establish a cache there for emergencies.

The Australians appears to have ceased activities. After repeating their attacks for a week, all was still, uncannily still. Each time uncle or Mr. Allister went away they came back with newspapers, but there never was the least word about us in them. Even our radio receiving stations never reported any mention of us.

Was uncle's idea right? Did the Australian government see that it could not get at us? Was it therefore ashamed and resolved to maintain a dignified silence about us? Be that as it may, we were going on with our plans.

Only this day we had commenced the cultivating of the third district, of a diameter of two kilometers. Now besides our plows and sowers we had reaping and threshing machines. We also had some great storehouses with central cooling, to prevent early germination, since we were already harvesting much more than we needed.

We even have a few immense meadow tracts of many hundred kilometers, also equipped with towers for artificial rain. On the meadows were pastured hundreds of sheep that savages brought us.

The great Zeppelins had also brought us a number of cattle of good stocks for breeding purposes. Raising them of course is a slow business, but we had the first calves this year.

It is always a somewhat exciting day when Zeppelins or planes arrive here or leave the territory. They fly very high and at a fair distance from the coast they produce an artificial mist about themselves, in order not to be seen. That is no new invention; it was tried out long ago, in the world war. For us it has a special significance. If airships wish to enter or leave our territory, for the time being we must of course shut off part of our electric protecting wall. There is the danger that Australian fliers will try to come in at the same time.

Part of our air fleet is always on duty watching the unprotected place and carefully examining every entering airship. Those are the only occasions on which our fliers are armed, but they never yet used their weapons. It seems as though the Australians had forgotten us. At any rate, we never forget for a moment the needful precautions and are always on our guard.

Uncle was about to leave. He had already left us many times before, but on this day I was uneasy. I looked at him searchingly. He was not ill; he was just as sound and healthy as ever, yet I was more anxious than usual.

He assembled in the great hall of the casino-hotel all the engineers, Holborn, myself, and Allister, who this time was to go with him and remain abroad for a considerable time. Uncle always had these assemblies before leaving. He had to arrange his plans and name a substitute for himself for the period of his absence.

Formerly this substitute was always Mr. Holborn, of whom I was very fond. Later, when the technical developments became so great that the simple American could no longer supervise them, we all thought it natural that Chief Engineer Morawetz should take over the control during the absence of the chief

Now uncle was leaving for the first time since we had been at war with Australia. There still was a war, even if complete quiet had prevailed for several weeks, since there had been no declaration of peace.

A Startling Announcement

UNCLE made his announcement. "This time I shall probably stay away a month."

Chief Engineer Morawetz interrupted him: "You know that you can leave us without fear, Mr. Schmidt."

Even now uncle has us call him "Mr. Schmidt."

Morawetz went on, "We all know our duties. First we will finish the fourth agricultural district. I know all your plans, and you know that in me you have a representative on whom you may rely absolutely in every way."

Uncle smiled at him. "I know, my dear Chief Engineer; I know you perfectly. I know every one of my officials, and I know just what to think of them."

I could not help being startled. Doubtless I erred, but it seemed to me as though Morawetz looked taken aback, although my uncle smiled pleasantly.

All this time I had been unable to overcome my aversion for Morawetz and his three friends. Now I recalled as quick as lightning that the previous evening uncle had had a long talk in his room with Morawetz and that the latter had sat during this time on the chair which I had come to call the "thought-chair."

Had uncle been reading his thoughts the night before?

"My dear Mr. Morawetz, this time I must change things. During this trip I have determined to make my nephew Fritz my representative, with full powers."

I could feel myself blushing, while Morawetz grew pale. For a moment he lost his self-control and jumped up. "Have I deceived your confidence, that you insult me so? It is—"

Uncle had a still more friendly look. "Not at all, my dear Mr. Morawetz. It is no insult, it is simply my wish that during my absence the new large high tension plant at Lady Edith Lagoon be completed, and for that you are indispensable. I request you therefore to undertake this new work with your proven industry, which I have always recognized. That is much more important than filling my place, which my nephew will do meantime as my representative. You see that, do you not, my dear Morawetz?"

He held out his hand, which Morawetz took with an expression more sour than sweet.

"Gentlemen, you have heard my wishes, and I request you to work for my nephew during my absence just as faithfully as you have for me. You know that in spite of his youth he is a good worker and that some day, if anything should befall me, all this will belong to him. I therefore request you to remember that while I am away he is your chief."

I was conscious that all were looking at me, and I felt embarrassed. I was not only embarrassed but also perturbed. Uncle had never spoken so solemnly before departing. It almost sounded as though he feared he would not return and was putting his house in order.

* * *

We were alone in uncle's living room. He was making his last preparations for the journey. I summed up all my courage.

"Do you distrust Morawetz?"

He looked sharply at me. "You too?"

"Morawetz, Stobitzer, Helding, and Kurzmüller."

"Why?"

"I have noticed that they are inveterate gamblers and often spend entire nights in the saloon of the camel drivers."

(Illustration by Paul)

We looked intently at the wonderful sight. The keg was rising faster and shining more brightly.

"Why did you never tell me?"

"I spoke to Holborn about it, and he laughed. They are otherwise good workers and you have confidence in them. I do not want to disturb you, and I am averse to accusing anyone. I have not the slightest evidence of any bad faith toward you, and what they do with their money is after all their own affair. I just wanted to keep on observing them in silence."

Uncle looked searchingly at me for a while. "I think that you have a keen eye for your years. When I return I shall cancel my contracts with these four men. Now I am still too much in need of them. Besides, I do not think they will do anything wrong at present. But it is well that you know them. Keep your eyes on them, but do not let it be noticed, at any rate, that we have spoken about them."

I held out my hands to him. "Thank you, uncle, for your confidence in me. I hope I shall prove worthy of it."

He pressed my hand. "Here's to a safe return!"

I went with him to the plane, which he himself was to pilot. Full of anxiety I saw him off. Was there not a gloomy foreboding in his last words?

Then I myself went to the engine room and personally saw to the shutting off of the electric current while uncle left our territory. I did not become until some time later when I heard by radio from the ocean, an hour later, that he had safely left the latitude of Australia.

The Conspiracy

IT was a month later. I was hoping every moment that uncle would return. I really had no reason for blaming myself in any way. The work was going on well. I had been able to operate several new rain towers. The fourth agricultural district was completed. Every evening I received news from Morawetz by telephone from Lady Edith Lagoon and knew that the power station there was close to completion.

Mr. Holborn, who made the daily rounds in my place (since I could not leave the central station where questions keep coming from all directions), also brought good news to me. I had every reason to be content, yet I was not.

I was obeyed; what I ordered was done. Yet I had the feeling that there was always a certain mocking smile on the lips of the engineers. Was it because I am the youngest? Or was it simply because the ones about me were those I distrusted—Stobitzer, Helding, and Kurzmüller? Or was it just my imagination?

I felt like speaking about it to Holborn, but I did not. He was so very tired when he came back from the flight; he had aged greatly, looking much older than my uncle—and besides, he would not have believed my suspicions.

This afternoon something happened which had never occurred before. Here we have a group of fifty Chinese laborers, under the special command of Stobitzer.

I never liked these people, and I often had occasion to scold them. This afternoon it happened again, and I saw threatening glances and clenched fists. Did they want to resist? For the first time I showed them a firm will. They yielded, and said not a word as they sneaked away. Still I know that they are inwardly hostile to me.

* * *

It was night. I was tired, and my actual desire was to sleep, since the day had been hard for me. Yet I felt uneasy. Was it because of the encounter with the laborers? Did it come from the mocking smile on Stobitzer's face?

I stepped once more from my house. All was as still as death, and I could see down the street to the saloon of the camel drivers. This appeared to be perfectly dark, but in the door stood the landlord. It was Jacques, our former servant, who from the first day had been much attached to me. Seeing me, he put his finger to his lips and nodded his head, to have me come nearer. Then he whispered, "I was just going to get you."

"What is it?"

"I do not know; I understand people so poorly."

I went behind him through a dark passage. I always carried a revolver, and now I held it securely in my pocket. The landlord led me into his living room, which was dark and right behind the guest room.

I pressed close to the opening of a sliding window. In the hall were Stobitzer, Helding, Kurzmüller, and the fifty laborers. They seemed about to break up a gathering, and I could hear Stobitzer speaking.

"We must hurry. Are the three trucks coupled together?"

"Certainly."

"Are storage batteries in them?"

"Yes."

"We must get to Mt. Russell during the night."

"How do we get through the electric wall?"

"That is our business. We shall take the full keg and as much more as we can carry. Then quickly over the border. Early tomorrow an airship is expected, and therefore the wall of rays must be opened at nine o'clock. At the same time we must get through the border."

"You guarantee that there is no danger?"

"Nonsense, the junior chief is asleep."

"And the pay?"

"As was agreed; if we bring millions to the Australians, we can also demand millions."

"Then let us be quick about it!"

They rushed to the exits. I forced myself to be calm, though I should have liked to rush out at them. But that would have been senseless; I could see by their greedy faces that they would simply have struck me down, and then all would have been lost.

"Quick, to the central station," I said.

"Wait a minute, until they are gone away. There is no use in getting killed."

Then I had an idea. This evening Morawetz had not telephoned from Lady Edith Lagoon. I questioned the landlord, "Have you seen Chief Engineer Morawetz?"

"Certainly, three hours ago."

"Did you see him here?"

"He came along with Mr. Stobitzer and then went away."

"Which way?"

"Toward the flying field."

Now we were outside. All was still, and the three trucks had already left. I ran as fast as I could to the central station.

CHAPTER XVII

Mutiny!

I WAS completely out of breath when I reached the sheet iron house. For the first time I was angered by our mechanical servants. I pressed the lever to call the car, and I knew that three minutes must pass before it arrived, and two minutes more before it went down again with me. It was of course foolish to be vexed. Even if it had been possible for me to lift the trapdoor and run down the steps, no matter how fast I ran, I

would surely not have arrived sooner than the car would.

The whistle sounded, the car came; I jumped in. On the way I counted the seconds before I should arrive. At last I was in the great machine cave. Holborn had finished his evening rounds. He was giving the switchboard another examination and was lighting a cigar. When I rushed in so excited, he looked at me in surprise.

"What is it?"

"A conspiracy."

"By whom?"

"The fifty Chinese laborers—"

Holborn shrugged his shoulders indifferently.

"Stobitzer, Helding, and Kurzmüller are in league with them. By chance I overheard them settling matters. They are now en route to Mt. Russell."

"What do you mean by 'en route' ?"

"They have coupled three trucks together."

Holborn smiled grimly.

"We can stop that for them."

He turned a lever.

"Now the road has no current."

"They have storage batteries charged only yesterday. Do not take the matter too lightly. The three engineers know what they are about. I think the affair has been long planned."

"What do they want to do?"

I was in despair that the American could remain so calm.

"Simply to steal the radium."

Again Holborn shrugged his shoulders.

"That would not be so terrible, since we have still more of it. You know as well as I do that it is impossible to get through the circuit of the Rindell-Matthews rays, which surround the mountain with a safe wall. I do not think that the engineers are so silly as to try. If they do, I am sorry for them, but I suppose they have a right to run to their own destruction."

"But what if the rays are shut off?"

"Impossible. It simply cannot be done. There is nobody at the machine, which works automatically. Do you think that the machine can be bribed or perhaps be influenced by a friendly shout?

"You know perfectly well that there is only one possibility of shutting off the machine," he said in reproval: "the subterranean wire which runs to the soda spring. But nobody knows of the concealed little cave in which the wire lies, and even if they did find the cave, they would surely not discover the switch, which lies under the prickly pears."

"Chief Engineer Morawetz knows it."

"Morawetz is as faithful as you and I. Besides, he is not here tonight. He is busy at Carnegie Lake, about a thousand kilometers south of here, installing the new plant."

"The landlord Jacques saw Chief Engineer Morawetz this evening, about three hours ago. He was down in the city."

Holborn paled.

"We shall find out about that at once."

We went into the other room, there Holborn got central.

"Carnegie Lake, emergency."

"All right." There was a pause while the operator got the connection.

"I want to speak with Chief Engineer Morawetz."

I had taken the second receiver and could follow the conversation.

"Chief Engineer Morawetz has not been here for three days. Engineer Weber is taking his place. Would you like to speak with him?"

"No, thank you."

For the first time Holborn was becoming uneasy.

"Morawetz left his post without telling us!"

"Morawetz is Stobitzer's best friend."

"Where was Morawetz?"

"Down in the city, near the flying field."

Holborn asked for a connection with the flying field.

"Was Chief Engineer Morawetz there?"

"He left the flying field two hours ago in plane 237, piloting it himself."

"Where was he going?"

"To Carnegie Lake."

Holborn hung up.

"I am convinced that he went to Mt. Russell." I said earnestly.

"Man, you are making me terribly uneasy." Holborn said nervously.

Again he telephoned the flying field.

"Get a fast plane ready at once and bring it to the central station!"

We walked up and down in excitement. Then Holborn rushed again to the telephone.

"Lady Edith Lagoon Post."

"Well?"

"Immediate information when you sight a plane."

"Just saw plane 237 pass."

"Which way?"

"Toward Mt. Russell." Holborn slammed down the phone.

"Damn it, you are right."

The Catastrophe

THE whistle announced the car. We found the plane up above. For a moment we hesitated.

"A strange thing. For the first time I doubt whether I can leave the power plant alone. A mutiny among us? Incredible. What if they should destroy the power plant?"

"Shall I stay here?" I asked.

"I should like to take you along. I don't want to bear all the responsibility."

"I do not believe there is any danger threatening the power plant," I commented. "The people are crazy for the radium. I believe that at this moment they are thinking of nothing else."

Holborn busied himself with the levels. He disconnected some circuits and made other connections.

"They will not get in easily. I changed the wires. Now it is impossible to call the car, and whoever touches the switch will be electrocuted. I hope the chief does not come in our absence."

"We must warn him."

"That is impossible. We must risk things as they are. If he comes, he will see that the switch is changed."

* * *

We sped through the night. The fast plane made more than three hundred kilometers an hour, although the wind was against us. In silence we sat side by side. But we could hardly have spoken, anyway the motor made so much noise. Holborn was at the controls.

It was midnight. We saw Mt. Russell before us, silhouetted against the night sky. There was the remarkable sugarloaf, seemingly perched on the rounded lower part which looked like a brick-kiln. At the foot of the mountain we saw lights—not torches or burning fagots, such as the natives have—but electric lights. People were running up and down with them. We saw

a snaky line of such electric lamps climbing up the slope.

We glided down quickly. Holborn, for once was full of excitement.

"Now, it must be decided. Now they are very close to the wall of rays. If they—"

He did not finish the sentence. A frightful crash resounded. Suddenly the rocky cone seemed to have become a volcano. Sparks and flames, jets of flame many meters long shot out from the mountain in all directions. Our plane cracked and split in all its joints and was forced down to earth. We lay under it and involuntarily covered our faces with our hands. All Hell seemed to have broken loose.

It was just as though we were in the centre of a fearful bombardment. At the same time an earthquake seemed shaking the ground beneath us, while a thunderstorm filled the air.

I struggled to my feet. My limbs ached, and I felt that my whole body had been showered by red-hot grains of sand. Holborn was sitting near me, his eyes full of horror.

The moon was bright and full. I could see that my companion was almost naked and that his face, his arms, and his chest were dotted with countless little black dots. Holborn seized my hand.

"Mt. Russell has vanished."

Not until now had I sufficiently collected my wits to know clearly where we were. I managed to look in the direction of the mountain. Holborn was right. To be sure, the broad lower part of the mountain still seemed to be there, but the pointed cone had completely disappeared.

"How can that be?"

"The immense transformer station was built into the base of the cone. That conducted the current for the production of the Rindell-Matthews rays from the wire from the central plant to the apparatus."

"I know. But what then?"

"Morawetz wanted to shut off the current, and the whole plant exploded."

Holborn said this in the energetic tone of a person who asserts what he does not believe.

I slowly managed to step over to him.

"How can a machine explode? How can such an explosion occur that the whole mountain breaks up and flies into the air in a thousand pieces?"

Holborn nodded. "Quite incredible. There is only one explanation."

"What?"

"We have simply been children who were pleased with the first thing they found. Perhaps it was just as well for us. We have done nothing and investigated nothing. We have been contented and happy with the old mine and have taken out radium by the bucketful, which our cleverer forerunners of ten thousand years ago left behind for us. We never reflected as to what that upper cone—may have contained."

"Perhaps by chance the whole giant meteor lay on the crater of a volcano," I ventured, "and the disturbance now caused the eruption of the volcano."

The Strange Sight

HOLBORN shook his head. "In the interior of Australia there are no volcanoes. The only ones near here surround the continent in a wide belt of little islands. Probably this whole strange cone was filled with gas or some extremely powerful explosive, perhaps as yet unknown to us."

"Then perhaps we have lost a great discovery."

"A discovery which can only do harm is no great loss," Holborn said contentiously. "It probably happened that when Morawetz, who had never tended this machine, tried to shut off the powerful current by the switch at the soda spring, great sparks jumped inside near the apparatus. It is conceivable that the earthquakes which we have felt in the last few days made rifts in the mountain.

"If there really was a gigantic hollow space filled with gases and explosives, then it is conceivable that the grotto where the machine was, also was filled with these gases and that the spark ignited them."

"The mountain certainly was filled with gases and explosives," I replied in a tone of conviction. "The jets of flame spurted out on all sides."

Holborn seized my hands. Again he showed his warm heart.

"Do you know the single true marvel which happened tonight?"

I understood him and nodded. "That Heaven gave both of us our lives."

Holborn smiled a bit sadly. "The good plane was true to the last. We owe our lives to its great elastic wings alone that withstood so well the air pressure. It was chance that the rain of rocks spared us."

"But the others?"

"Let us not think of them. They have made a fearful atonement. It is absolutely impossible that one of them should be alive. Look where the lights were gleaming. The crumbled fragments of the mountain have now formed a new hill there."

Slowly we climbed this hill. The form of the lower part of the mountain was also completely changed. The forest was covered with rubbish, and tree-tops covered with grey dust towered up sadly from the debris.

Now we stood where one entered the little garden, the wonderful garden which had bloomed so marvelously under the influence of the radium. A miracle had happened here, too. Perhaps the garden owed its safety to the fact that it stood too close to the cone and that the latter was blown up and over it. The garden was uninjured, and its splendid flowers bloomed in their former glory.

Where the soda spring had been, there was now a deep hole, like a shell hole, and the spring had disappeared. The mountain itself now formed a sort of crater.

"Mr. Holborn, it is a volcano. Don't you see in that depression, which probably hides the true crater, the reddish light?"

"We will go back."

We hurried a few steps, and then we stood still as though enchanted. What use to flee? Why flee with our weak feet, if the mountain was really to hurl out fire and lava? But it was not so. It was a perfectly supernatural sight at which we were staring, overcome by its strangeness.

In the centre, above the now level top of the mountain, completely surrounded by a magic reddish light, floated a great cylindrical object, with one of its somewhat pointed ends turned upward.

Now I grasped Holborn's hand. "That is the great metal keg in which we packed two hundred pounds of radium, to carry it to the central plant. It will explode."

Holborn denied this, his voice having the tone of a person carrying out a most sacred duty: "Radium does not explode."

I wondered why I whispered when I replied. "How is it possible for the heavy metal body with the radium

inside it to float? No, it is not floating, it is rising, faster and faster, into the air."

Holborn was carried away by the sight. "In its surrounding reddish shimmer, does it not look like the Holy Grail?"

CHAPTER XVIII

The Return of Schmidt

WE looked intently at the wonderful sight. The meteor, which we had actually made, was rising faster and shining more brightly. Then we saw a flame leap high in the air and heard a hissing noise, as though some body which we could not recognize in the speed of its fall, rushed through the air and plunged into the blooming garden not far from us.

At first we supposed that the meteor had burst, but on looking up again we saw it going far up above us in its course, like a little glowing dot. Now we ran into the garden. Holborn cried out, "A plane! A plane that has crashed!"

I stood rigid, my knees trembling. "Is it uncle?" Though the thought was preposterous, I had an intuition that made me convinced.

We ran as fast as we could. We found a heap of twisted smoking ruins. The cabin had split apart at the crash, and it was filled with flames.

"Where is uncle?"

Holborn cried out, "Here he is!"

At least twenty paces from the plane we saw the body of my uncle. The cabin had been burst open in the crash, perhaps even up in the air. At any rate uncle had been hurled out and had fallen into an incredibly dense growth of ferns, which had somewhat broken the fall.

(Illustration by Paul)

Again he bent very close to the wound—this savage, with infinite skill . . . then the brain began to pulse

We knelt beside him. Holborn torn open his shirt and laid his hand on his heart. "He is alive."

His face, which was buried in the ferns, was bloody yet waxy. I trembled with anxiety for him, and the American cautiously tried to investigate his wounds.

He stood up and looked earnestly at me. "Now we need a good doctor."

"Have you discovered anything?"

"His limbs do not seem broken, and I do not think

there are any internal injuries. He breathes very calmly now, and he has no foam on his lips. But I would rather he had broken his arms and legs."

"What has happened?"

"I could set broken legs, in case of need, but I think a piece of iron which is lying nearby has fractured his skull."

"He will die."

Holborn straightened up and glared at me. "No weakness now, no hesitation!"

"What can we do? Take him to the central station? How? We have neither a plane nor a car, nor any doctor either."

He reflected further. "There is only one way, only one resource. Truly, it seems an extraordinary chance."

He ran from me, up the hill. He put both hands to his mouth and gave three times in succession a long-drawn cry. It was the same cry which my uncle had used in calling for Mormora, the chief of the cannibals.

All remained still. Holborn repeated the cry even more loudly, and then I could have shouted for joy, in spite of my anguish, for an answer came from the distance. I did not know what Holborn intended, but I had heard much about the healing powers of the savages. Though I did not understand, I clung to every hope.

Uncle began to draw deep slow breaths. His face took on a bit of color and then became red, as though he were in a fever. I could only kneel by him, and I was not ashamed that the tears came to my eyes. How sunken his face was; this face full of a thousand wrinkles, bespeaking years of denial. How weak and helpless he lay there, only a being who moved softly, instead of the great, energetic, courageous man he had been.

I heard voices beside me. Three men stepped up, Holborn and two savages. As yet I had come into but little contact with them. They lived a shy existence in the woods. I merely knew that they were still cannibals, though secretly and furtively.

The two savages were almost naked. Their bodies were extensively tattooed and colored. Strangely-shaped scars, which they had produced artificially, accompanied their wild ornaments. Each of them, the old one as well as the young man, had a wild shock of hair dyed red and stuck full of all possible bright feathers. In their hands were bows and arrows. I knew that the points were dipped in the deadly poison which they got from the roots of the bamboo.

While the younger stood still with an impassive face, the old man knelt down beside my uncle, felt of his head, and then spoke to Holborn. I understood nothing of it, but two words struck me: "Agala" and "Tena Ingeit." I knew that the former word meant "lord" and therefore meant my uncle and that the latter word was the name of the conjurer of the tribe.

At once the two savages sped away in great bounds.

"You mean to—?"

Holborn nodded. "We must have a good doctor. Every minute is precious. Since we cannot conjure up a white doctor, we must rely on the magician."

We stepped aside a bit.

"I was right, the skull is fractured. Probably splinters have entered the brain. If anything can save him, it is an immediate trepanning of the skull and the careful removal of all foreign bodies before festering and a fever from the wound set in."

"You think they can do this?"

"I hope so."

Only a few minutes passed before the chief returned with a whole swarm of men and women. With their remarkably sharp stone knives and axes they at once started to fell young bamboo shoots in the garden and to build a little hut. Others equally quickly wove a sort of litter and covered it with fern.

Uncle groaned.

"Shall we not at least put a cold compress on his head?"

Holborn said no. "We will now leave everything to the conjurer."

An Operation in the Wilderness

SUDDENLY the latter stood before us. He looked very differently than when I had first seen him. Now he was neither painted nor anointed. On the contrary, he was washed very clean and was stark naked except for a loin cloth. In his hand he had a little package done up in green leaves. This he laid on the ground.

The man had a very serious face. He was tall and elderly. As he now knelt beside uncle and carefully touched the injured head with incredibly gentle fingers, it seemed as though I were watching a European specialist making a diagnosis.

He beckoned to two young savages, equally well washed, who seemed to be his assistants. While Tena Ingeit himself held the head of my uncle, they carried him to the litter which had been prepared and laid him down. The conjurer called out a few words, and now the assistants brought a number of opened cocoanuts which were full of liquid but had not commenced to sprout.

With this liquid all three now very carefully washed their hands. I could not help asking Holborn, "Why doesn't he use water?"

Instead of Holborn the chief replied in broken English, "The wound shall not weep pus."

Holborn whispered to me, "It must not fester. Probably the liquid has an antiseptic effect; at any rate, I have never seen wounds which were treated with this cocoanut juice suppurate."

Meanwhile the conjurer had opened his package. There was nothing in it but a few very sharp splinters of flint, a few shells polished to a sharp edge, and some fishbones. Certainly they were very few implements, but he also washed these very carefully with the juice of some other cocoanuts.

I was amazed to see how infinitely clean this ordinarily dirty person could be and how thoughtfully and definitely he made every move. First he made with the flint knife a sharp cut right across the wound. Then with two fishbones, which he used as pincers, he carefully lifted out the shattered bits of bone, while the invalid groaned heavily.

"The brain does not pulse, bits of bone must have been driven in."

"Then—is it all over?"

"Be quiet and wait."

I saw a quick reproachful glance from the conjurer to me. What clever eyes the man had!

Again he bent very close to the wound and I shuddered to see this savage, with infinite skill, in the act of picking out a number of splinters, without even touching the brain with his hand. Then—the brain began to pulse very gently.

He now took the central leaf of a bunch of banana leaves, washed this also in a new cocoanut, warmed it over a hot fire, and pressed it over the wound. Then he very skilfully drew the skin and tissues over it

again, washed them also with a fresh cocoanut, and then fastened the head up with all sorts of vegetable fibres, which his assistants handed him.

For a moment the conjurer waited, after he had laid my uncle's head back on a cushion of cool ferns. I myself was full of wonder. Uncle's face again had its normal color, he slept peacefully, he did not seem feverish, since his skin was not hot, and his pulse was strong and regular.

I could not restrain myself. I stepped up to the conjurer, seized his hands, and pressed them. He looked at me in amazement at this expression of friendship which was strange to him. Then he looked at uncle and back at me. Probably he thought I was uncle's son. He slapped me cordially on the shoulder, stroked my hair, smiled at me, and went away with his assistants.

The other savages had also withdrawn, after the women had brought us some roast meat and fruit. I said to the American, "Do you really think that he will recover?"

"I certainly hope so."

Then he sat down and took out his pocket-knife.

"We will eat, for we must keep up our strength."

He saw the rather close look which I gave the meat.

"No, no, that is kangaroo."

"Are they really cannibals?" I asked, looking up.

"Certainly. Others could not perform such an operation. Perhaps it is just their cannibalism which makes them so conversant with human anatomy."

"That is terrible. Yet there was something kind and intelligent in that fellow's eyes."

Holborn nodded. "It is a remarkable fact, which has been observed in New Pomerania, New Mecklenburg, and also in Bougainville Island, that the cannibals are mostly more intelligent than the non-cannibals."

I shook my head in surprise.

"We must get a clear idea about it. It certainly is terrible, but cannibalism almost always is due to strange religious views. It is not practiced because of a fondness for this meat. Sometimes it is sacrifices made to the gods, as for instance the old Aztecs in Mexico thought to partake of the deity in the form of a handsome youth. Or else they believe that if they eat a dead enemy who was mighty in life, his power will pass over to them. There are many things which are hard to understand and easy to condemn."

Alone!

WE ate in silence. Uncle lay very still with closed eyes, apparently sleeping peacefully.

After weaving a sort of sunshade over uncle's litter, using shady branches, we climbed right up the mountain to see the extent of the damage. The old mine had disappeared.

There was a crater in semicircular form leading down to the lower end of the shaft. Almost everywhere we saw smooth rock, but here and there some pitchblende was still in sight. We at once recognized it by its greasy lustre.

Holborn nodded. "There are still several hundred pounds of it, and we can get out a few millions worth of radium. In truth, we must be quick about it, because if once the plants of the primeval forest take possession of this ground, all is lost."

"I feel faint."

Holborn pulled me up. I saw that he too was tottering.

"We have no insulating garments."

With our machetes we cut off a number of prickly pears and threw them down. We knew that there was no plant which grew more rapidly and kept others from growing. We also knew that prickly pears were easier to remove than the roots of trees.

It was evening. We had watched all day beside uncle's litter. He had not opened his eyes, but he was breathing calmly. Now that it was cool and the sun had set, the savages came back. We had said nothing to them, but they knew we needed them. Tena Ingeit had not come with them; he seemed sure of success. Without saying much, the savages took up uncle's litter and began to walk slowly down the valley. I went beside them with Holborn.

"One of us must get as quickly as possible to the nearest plant. We must have a plane here, and one of us must get to the central plant, to see that everything is all right there. You are younger than I. Do you want to go?"

"If you think it best."

It was two nights later. In spite of the heat I had traveled all day, but luckily through the bush, not through the desert. Then I came upon one of the cars on which the mutineers had ridden up to the mountain. It had rolled back by itself, and chance had lodged a stone in front of the wheels. Perhaps it was a stone from the splintered mountain. I was able to remove this brake, and now the car went back with me quickly. Thus I saved many kilometers of walking, until I came to level ground again.

Then came another night march. I held my revolver in my hand. Snakes crossed my path, birds screamed up in the trees, kangaroos whisked about in the distance, and occasionally the laughing jackass guffawed above me.

When the sun rose for the second time, I had reached our post at Lady Edith Lagoon. The guard had indeed seen the glow in the sky, but otherwise he knew nothing. I telephoned to the central station in Electropolis. Engineer Zöllner was there, and he was amazed that none of us was at the central plant. I merely told him for the moment that he should at once send two fast planes.

The two planes arrived. One I at once sent on, telling the pilot that he must fly low and keep a lookout for the sick party. I said that uncle was slightly hurt and needed the plane. With the other I myself flew back to Electropolis.

Engineer Zöllner was waiting for me. He had noticed that the switch at the sheet iron house was altered. He had not touched it. Together we replaced things as before. Nothing had happened in the city. The few inhabitants were calm, and I saw from Zöllner's manner that the other eight engineers knew nothing about the mutiny of the four who had atoned for it with their lives.

I went through the empty caves, through my uncle's room. The doors opened and shut automatically before and after me. The lights went along the wall as usual and accompanied me to the engine room. Here all was as before. The wheels hummed and roared, the pulleys whizzed regularly through the air, the oil dripped into the joints, and the turbines roared and churned the water. All was as usual, except that I was alone. I had not seen the servants, and Zöllner had remained above ground and had returned to the city. Uncle was ill, perhaps already dead—.

Before me were those gigantic machines which did not need me, stretching out their iron arms and bending like living beings to the right and left, singing their low-

pitched song—the song of the machine, the song of the iron man.

I stared at them and thought I understood how the man of whom my uncle had told me had become mad, when he was alone with these iron men.

CHAPTER XIX

Uncertain Days

I WAS alone for almost eight weeks, carrying on the whole work myself, but my thoughts were constantly with my uncle. He did not come back by plane. Tena Ingeit, the conjurer and medicine man, the cannibal, opposed this. He wanted uncle carried by the savages to the central station. I saw that he was right and much wiser than I. Uncle was ill, very ill.

Even if the operation succeeded, he had a very bad wound, and the least shock would have killed him. To be sure, the plane trip would have lasted only an hour, and then he would have been at home, but he could easily have been shaken up by this trip. Even the vibration of the propeller would have shaken his body, and the rising and descending would have altered the flow of blood to the brain.

Tena Ingeit was right, and I could see that we ourselves were not so very wise. Uncle was carried, of course only at night, while in the daytime the savages put up a new leaf hut each morning, so that he would have shade. Their women carried along all the material for these huts.

I knew all this because a plane always went with them and returned to me. It carried ice from our refrigeration plant, also food and drink.

It is all so strange to me. I feel calmer because this savage tribe is accompanying and watching over my uncle, for I acquired more confidence in these cannibals than in our own people. Our own people wanted to rob us, and caused the whole disaster. They were responsible for the accident that befell uncle.

But it is good training for me to be alone. I feel that I have learned very much. I have not only learned to discharge the tasks set me, but also to act independently. I sit at the desk where uncle used to sit. I know exactly what is to be done and give by telegraph the orders which, I believe, my uncle would have given. Our territory is very great. In most parts nothing is known of uncle's mishap. The ground glass screen keeps lighting up, dispatches appear on it, and I give the answers. I decide as I think best. It would be vain to put things off, for weeks will pass before uncle is well again. Unfortunately Mr. Allister is away for a long time.

I have commenced an investigation. The four other engineers who are in the vicinity I have summoned to come by plane. And now I know that all of these men did not like Morawetz and his three friends. I realize now that they suspected more than I.

We broke into the houses of the four criminals and searched their possessions. Of course they were more guilty than the laborers. Morawetz was the soul of the whole affair.

I shuddered when I thought it all over. It was well that uncle had gone away. They wanted to kill him. Morawetz was either frivolous or else very sure of his business. He had not even burned his papers. I found letters from Canberra. They were written by Mr. Spencer, Lord Albernoon's secretary. The lord himself apparently did not want his name used. Since giving up the war, they were trying to down uncle in this way. They offered Morawetz an immense sum if he would deliver to them the contents of the mountain and first of all that of the great keg,—that great keg which ultimately flew out into the ether as a meteor.

It seemed to me best to hide all this from uncle. He should believe it an accident, until he got well again. I was startled by my own thoughts. I was calculating on his recovery, as though it were certain and yet—

At last the morning came when the savages reached Electropolis.

It looked as though they were carrying a corpse. Our Chinese stood on both sides of the street, as they came by. First came the chieftain in full warpaint, holding spear, bow, and arrows, as though he had to protect uncle. Then came the litter on which the invalid lay. Behind it walked together, like two old friends, old Holborn and Tena Ingeit, the latter now adorned in all his finery as a conjurer. The entire tribe followed in a procession.

We brought uncle down into the cave and put him on his bed. He looked very pale, and his eyes were closed. I stood in the next room with Holborn and Tena Ingeit. The conjurer emptied a brownish liquid from a gourd into a glass. Uncle was to drink this on awaking. We were by now accustomed to regard the conjurer as a physician, but he pleased me better when he was naked and only a simple person than when he was adorned in his finery.

Holborn looked much aged and worried. He pressed my hand.

"If only his heart holds out."

I sat on the edge of the bed. Uncle's eyes were open and he spoke—his voice very soft but perfectly clear. He was asking about the work.

I was very happy. He had no fever and was perfectly rational. He looked at me with such kind affectionate eyes.

Looking Backward

TO-DAY was a sad day. It is four years since I arrived in Electropolis. Four years, and what years they were! I still thought of the day when I first landed in the plane and saw the desolate place—the lonely shack of sheet iron—when I went with beating heart for the first time down into the cavern, to meet my uncle.

I thought of the day when the village of the goldminers burned. That was really the initial cause of this gloomy day. I thought of the hour when Lord Albernoon brought us the agreement, then there was the day of triumph when he was again with us and when for the first time the rain clouds were produced over our four towers, and later when the first green growth lay over the first cornfields. And I thought of the day when the same Lord Albernoon declared war on us and wanted to exile us.

I stood on the high tower, the tallest of our radio towers, which had now been erected at the central station, and looked off. I had a telescope and I could see quite far. Now there were already six such great circles, each two kilometers in diameter, under cultivation. In each was a platform from which the machines were directed. We had given up the idea of a clockwork. There was already a beautiful forest of eucalyptus about Electropolis. We had bananas, corn, and barley to eat, raised by ourselves, growing out where there was formerly a stony desert.

We had new and mighty plans. We had seen that since we produced rain and since we had the ether rays

more and more in our power even the climate had changed. We no longer needed to submit entirely to the will of our machines.

Uncle's restless mind had thought out new plans. We would build cities. These would be industrial cities, lying between the cultivated circles and using the land between them. These would be cities with houses having not central heating, as at home, but central cooling. Groves of palms would grow about them. White men would live and work in these cities.

Since losing the port and Cambridge Gulf, we had been limiting ourselves to our planes and Zeppelins. We had built no railways. In quick succession the whole country, so far as it was under cultivation, has been spanned by a close network of airplane routes. We have also opened the iron works at Lady Edith Lagoon, and we do not miss the coal. We get electrical energy from the great stony stretches of the deserts, which the sun's rays strike, and besides we have now bored down to five subterranean rivers, which give us water power.

Our planes go in rapid succession. During the day we send ships with cooling apparatus, during the night the ships for passengers. We have no pilots for them. All are controlled from the central station by the same system which we used when we were testing the first wall of rays at Mt. Russell.

Our ships go very high when they are to go overseas. When they leave our territory, the ray wall is broken just for a few minutes which makes it impossible for any outsider to reach our land.

In Canberra they ignore us. They broadcast a yarn telling the world that strange air currents make it impossible to fly over the interior. Since the Australian government does not allow any other nation to make investigations, the world believes it, in fact has to believe it.

I had had a long talk with Uncle Heinrich, before he went on his last journey. He is now sixty-six years old. By his seventieth birthday we had hoped to have everything under cultivation. Then all our colored laborers, the Africans and Chinese, were to be sent away again for we should no longer need them. Only white men were to come here to live, to enjoy the fruits of the great works, to live and work in the industrial cities, to investigate further in our laboratories the various rays, and to eat what the newly created gardens produced.

It was eight weeks ago that uncle mentioned these things, with eyes shining, with youth in his step. Eight weeks! Now he was lying weakly on his couch. I knew that he must die. I had known for an hour since the physician, whom we got from San Francisco, examined him.

Tena Ingeit had performed the operation splendidly, but uncle's heart was exhausted, this human heart which unfortunately is no iron machine with replaceable parts.

Uncle was to die! Probably this very night! I could have cried it out to all this vast work of his. He was to die—and what then?

A signal flashed below. I had arranged with Holborn to send for me when uncle awoke. I cast one more glance about. A plane was just leaving the airport and heading north. It was the physician. He was leaving, because his skill was useless.

The Passing of the Master

I WAS down in the cave, for in the same cave in which he began his work, the lion wanted to die. He scorned going to one of the new houses that make up the Electropolis of to-day.

Holborn nodded to me. In the last few days he had become an old man. He seemed shriveled up. He was a fearful sight and I had to fight back my tears. I was not ashamed, but it was heartrending to see this old man weep, this man who spent a generation in the wilderness and who is nothing but an embodied iron will.

"He wants to speak to you."

Uncle was lying in the great armchair. He did not want to be in bed, for his weak heart was more comfortable when he was sitting. I would hardly have known him, if I had not gone through the last few days with him. Tena Ingeit was unable to save him, yet it is the savage perhaps to whom the entire work owes its future. He made uncle's mind clear.

Uncle looked at me a long time in silence. Suddenly I remembered. Uncle was sitting in the old chair with me opposite him—I knew the apparatus was working—for the last time uncle was reading my thoughts. Well, let him read them—they were nothing but sorrow for him.

"Get up and sit here on the stool. No, do not weep. We are only men after all. The hour comes for each of us some time. Heaven meant well with me. Better, far better than with Wenzel Aporius, whom it smote with madness."

Again he paused. His head sank forward a little. Holborn stepped up to him. He smiled and said, "Not yet—I feel— not yet."

He straightened up again. "I dictated my last will to Holborn. I have signed it. The witnesses were Holborn and the foreign doctor, who can do no more than Tena Ingeit, who told me yesterday that my heart was no longer good for anything. Take the will to your room, read it carefully, and then return it to me."

He saw me hesitate and smiled sorrowfully. "Go calmly. I have time for that. I beg you, go."

I sat in the old cavern, the one which had been my first dwelling when I came to Electropolis, and read. It was not easy. Mr. Holborn wrote it, and his clumsy hand is not accustomed to using the pen.

"I am about to die. I know it. I should have preferred living longer, but I am grateful to fate. To you, my dear Fritz, I leave all that I possess. You were my nephew when I summoned you here, and now you are my son. I long ago registered your adoption in the court at San Francisco. I thank you, Fritz. I have not been disappointed in you. Now be a man in this hour. Read what I propose, and I will ask the great destiny that rules mankind to let me live until I know your decision.

"The work is ready. The machines are where we need them. In the last few years I have taken a great deal of radium out of the mountain and sold it myself in San Francisco. I guessed that something would happen like what did occur at Mt. Russell. In the Bank of San Francisco I have on deposit one hundred million pounds.

"This money belongs to you, as well as this land, if you will continue my work and fulfill my conditions.

"My work belongs to Germany. Only Germans are to enjoy its fruits. But only men who wish welfare and peace, for these treasures are not to be used for the purposes of war, and its machines are never to become machines of war.

"Will you accept my heritage? I entrust it to you. Call your friends to help you, but let everything be a riddle and a mystery until everything is completed and New Germany is a power. If you will not, if you want to go back among mankind, then take a million pounds and go and do what you please."

It took me a long time to read all of it. I could not restrain my tears when I saw that Holborn had been crying as his stiff fingers made the letters.

I returned to uncle. He was asleep. Holborn was sitting beside him, feeling his pulse. He beckoned to me.

"He is getting weaker and weaker."

Did uncle hear him? He straightened up and looked at me. Again his mighty energy controlled his weakening body.

"Well?"

I was going to sit in the big chair, so that he could read my thoughts again, but he did not wish it.

"No longer—look me in the eye."

"I thank you, uncle." I could hardly speak.

"What for?"

"I swear to you by all that is sacred to me that my entire life belongs to your work!"

"My son!"

I knelt before him. His hand rested on my head. With his other hand he took Holborn's. For a long time we were silent. Then I felt a slight twitching of the fingers resting on my head.

"It is over—over!"

Holborn had spoken, but it was not the sound of a human voice. It was the shriek of an animal in pain. We laid my dead uncle on his bed. Then Holborn and I embraced and wept.

It was late at night, a wonderfully clear night. The sky was dotted with stars, while the moon shone full and bright. It was one of the most beautiful nights I experienced in Australia.

We followed uncle's wishes exactly. No telegraph cried out the death of the chief all over the country. It was to remain secret. No solemn funeral procession followed him to the grave.

A great electric shovel sank its blades into the earth. One of the mechanical men that he had made was digging his last resting place with its iron arms.

The body rested in a great heavy metal coffin. He himself had brought it from America years before. The iron arms of our machines carried it out and lowered it into the grave. The electric shovel then filled in the hole.

This was as uncle had desired. At the grave stood only Holborn and I and Mormora, while the savages danced the solemn death dance of their nation about the grave.

EPILOGUE

IT was a foggy day of early winter. The storm wind had howled all day over Berlin, and now it was damp and unpleasant. The people coming from the open gates of the factories hurried home.

Walter Gerhard was hurrying along. He was now a man of about thirty, still unmarried and a little embittered. He had not yet succeeded in getting a place as an engineer. The last five years he had been a master mechanic at the Siemens plant, glad of any port in the storm.

To-day he was different from his usual self. He was excited. During his work he had been even somewhat absent-minded. Now he was impatiently leaping up the steps of his dwelling in Elsässerstrasse.

"Good evening, Frau Müllensiefen."

"Heavens, Mr. Gerhard, you are jumping like a boy."

He hurriedly entered the large room which he had taken over five years before when his friend Fritz went on his mysterious journey. He looked about.

"Everything is ready?"

"Yes, I put in my big table with ten chairs around it, and I also ordered a whole case of beer."

"Then it is all right."

Frau Mullensiefen stood in the doorway and looked wondering at her boarder.

"This isn't your birthday, is it?"

She waited in vain for an answer, and then she shook her head and went away grumbling.

Meanwhile Walter Gerhard had stepped to his desk, unlocked it, and taken out a thick packet. It was a manuscript enclosed in an envelope, and the envelope was stuck with a very large number of Chinese stamps and bore the Shanghai postmark.

An hour later Walter Gerhard was no longer alone. With him were ten young men, the same who had been assembled in the Patzenhofer in Friedrichstrasse on the thirty-first of March, five years before. One would readily see that none of them had made much money, but it was equally obvious that they were serious persons who knew how to work hard.

They greeted Walter Gerhard, the president of their little club, in considerable surprise.

"Why have the meeting in your room to-day?"

"Why not in the Patzenhofer, as usual?"

"You will soon see." Gerhard answered mysteriously.

All were now assembled and sitting about the great table, looking expectantly at Gerhard, who had placed the packet before him on the table.

"To-day is again the thirty-first of March. You know the remarkable event which exactly five years ago to-day snatched our friend Fritz from our midst in so strange a manner. You know that I myself accompanied him to the flying field that evening, that he went out into the night, alone in a plane provided for him by a man named Allister. You also know that while I was gazing after the departing plane this Mr. Allister disappeared without leaving a trace and that we have never succeeded either in finding a sign of this Mr. Allister or obtaining word from our friend.

"You know that we slowly came to the conviction that he fell victim to some crime totally inexplicable to us. But this morning I suddenly got news of Fritz."

The friends sprang up. "News of Fritz?"

"Yes, indeed; very detailed news. See, it is almost a book. This extensive manuscript bears a Chinese postmark, was sent about six weeks ago, and seemingly comes from the interior of Australia."

Rudolph Sperber started up. "From Australia? Was it not said at that time that Fritz was to go to Australia with this mysterious Mr. Allister?"

Other voices joined in the clamor.

"What does he write then?"

"Is he well?"

"Don't keep us in suspense."

Walter Gerhard rapped on the table.

"You must let me finish speaking. In the letter accompany this manuscript it says neither more nor less than that Fritz is the possessor not only of many millions but also of a great part of Australia which has a very promising future. Likewise, that he requests all of us—do you hear, the eleven of us who by chance are all still united in friendship—to come to him and to bring our families along, in case we are married. He wants us to help him, under most advantageous conditions for us, in further developing his colony, which is said to contain half a million square kilometers."

The Long Story

THE ten young engineers leaped to their feet again. "Why, that is incredible!" said one.

"How can there be such a colony?" exclaimed another.

"Nobody ever heard of it."

"Such an undertaking?"

"There must have been something about it in the papers."

"We are living in the age of radio."

Again Walter Gerhard rapped his house-key on the table.

"Children, you must be quiet. All that you are shouting at me, I have of course said to myself already. Here is a manuscript. It is a sort of autobiography which Fritz has written. It begins with the thirty-first of March, five years ago, and ends about six weeks ago, with the sending of this letter from Shanghai. All last night I was reading through these remarkable accounts and thinking about them. They by no means give the impression that they were written by a lunatic, yet they are so full of absolutely incredible and puzzling things that I cannot pass judgment myself.

"I will tell you only one more thing beforehand. I said that Fritz asks us all to come to him, alone or with our families. In this letter was a check for five thousand English pounds, which is a hundred thousand marks in German money. It is payable at the Deutsche Bank in Berlin. To-day I used my noon-hour to go to the Deutsche Bank. The check is good and will be cashed at once, if the eleven of us will together sign a receipt for it. We are supposed to divide the amount into equal parts; in case one died in the meantime, his heirs were supposed to step into his place. Since all eleven of us are together, there is nothing to prevent our cashing this check. To be sure, the letter shows that it is his wish that we use the money to come to him."

Before the rest could speak again, Gerhard raised his hand.

"It seems to me that the simplest thing will be for us to sit here about the table while I read you the entire autobiography which Fritz has written, even if it does last several hours. Then, when you have all heard it, we will exchange our views about it and take counsel together."

They seated themselves about the great table and passed beer and cigars around. They were all full of excitement and anticipation. Walter Gerhard began to read the strange story Fritz had written, from the moment when, in despair about the continual letters of rejection, he received the puzzling letter from Mr. Allister on that thirty-first of March five years before, until the hour when he lowered his uncle into the grave and promised himself that he would continue his work.

Midnight was long past when Walter Gerhard laid aside the last page of the manuscript. Outside the wintry storm was rattling the windows, blowing the first snow against the panes.

Here in the room sat the eleven young men with glowing faces. Silently, breathless, all had listened to the strange things which Gerhard had read to them.

"What do you say now?"

After a pause Rudolf Sperber began. "It is a complete puzzle. It all sounds so simple and true, yet it must be impossible."

Another jumped up and strode up and down in excitement. "It must be a mistake. The check which you have cannot be paid. Poor Fritz is not in his right mind—perhaps he is in an insane asylum."

Another put in, "How can there be a large colony in Australia about which no one knows anything?"

Otto Walzmüller arose. He was a deep thinker, who concerned himself much with chemical things. "Wait a minute," said he. "Wasn't there really an item in the papers two or three years ago, telling about extraordinary discoveries of radium in the deserts of Australia?"

Gustav Schmelling pressed both hands to his head. "I remember something else. About a year ago the observatory reported that a remarkable body, a sort of meteor, had risen up in the south-east—somewhere in the vicinity of Australia—coming from the earth. The thing was observed by only two observatories and was taken to be an error or else an attempt to send an ether rocket up into space."

"All that proves nothing. This manuscript comes from a lunatic. Perhaps he too heard of these things and wove them into an incredible story."

"It Is True!"

WALTER calmly allowed them all to express themselves. Then he said, "All these ideas came to me, also, but I have discarded them. Besides, say what you will, this check is genuine and will be paid. Therefore there is no question that Fritz has the disposal of such a sum. I have another plan. Each of us will manage to get a few hours off tomorrow. The matter is worth it. Tomorrow I shall make inquiries at the Australian Embassy. They must know something there. You, Walzmüller, will investigate about the radium discovery. You, Schmelling, will inquire at the observatory regarding the meteor. You, Grützmacher, have information at hand about San Francisco. Perhaps you can find out whether in the last few years great purchases of machinery were sent from there to this mysterious Mr. Schmidt. You, Himmelsbach, are in the Meteorological Institute and can make inquiries about rain-making. You, Walter, are to go to the Geographical Institute and try to learn what is actually going on in the interior of Australia."

It was about two in the morning when the young people, of course greatly excited, went out into the night.

It was the next evening. Frau Mullensiefen was greatly surprised that she again had to set up the great table and the chairs. The eleven friends again assembled punctually.

Gerhard began, "I was at the Australian Embassy. The official was extremely discourteous and at first refused all information. Finally he admitted that five years ago a tract of the Australian desert was sold to what he called a crazy American named Schmidt. Furthermore, I ascertained from old Australian papers the following established fact, that at exactly the same time as Fritz gives the then President of the Australian Ministry, Albernoon, suddenly had to resign, and that he was reproached for having foolishly sold very great treasures of Australia to this American Schmidt."

Herbert Grützmacher arose. "I have been able to prove that in recent years, the American machinery factories have made extraordinary shipments of electrical and agricultural machines of all kinds, likewise railroad equipment, to an American named Schmidt; that the same person bought a great number of freight-steamers in San Francisco; and that these with all the machinery purchased went out into the Pacific, the destination always being kept secret."

Himmelsbach tendered his report: "Such attempts to

make rain, as Fritz describes, are recognized and also successful on a small scale. The investigators are not yet sure whether it is possible on a large scale. It has however been observed that in the last few years cloud formations have actually been seen over the continent of Australia.

"Attempts have been made to investigate the pathless regions by airplane, but the Australian government, which does not permit other nations to make such attempts, claims that remarkable currents of air have arisen there, which make it impossible for any plane to fly to the interior, or which rather turn back all planes again."

Gerhard sprang up. "That is the effect of the Rindell-Matthews rays, the electric wall and the distant control, about which Fritz told."

"The Geographical Institute confirm the impossibility of making more exact investigation of the interior of Australia, on account of the ban imposed by the Australian government."

Finally Walzmüller said, "I have been unable to learn anything about the discovery of radium in Australia, but in recent years a most extraordinary amount of radium has been put on the market by America, in fact through a certain Mr. Schmidt in San Francisco. He would however give no hint as to the source of this radium."

For a time deep silence prevailed among the young people. Then Gerhard took the floor again, his voice trembling with intense emotion.

"My dear friends! After all that we have heard, we may no longer doubt that not only has this mysterious Mr. Schmidt actually lived but also our dear friend Fritz has spoken the truth in everything."

No one contradicted this. All were deeply moved, and some in the outburst of feeling put their arms about the shoulders of their friends.

Gerhard continued, "But if all this is true, then it is a mighty thing which is arising there, not merely an incredibly clever utilization of all the technical, electrical, and chemical forces of our earth but also a new sort of peaceful conquering of the world.

"Australia has perceived that it is powerless against this conquest. For all of us and for our fatherland, however, it can be of infinite significance. Our friend, has taken upon himself the heritage of his dead uncle. He has called upon us to come to him—we, who have been consuming ourselves in the vain struggle here—and to help him to construct it further. He has richly provided us with the means to go to him, but he asks of all of us our word of honor to remain silent at present about the work which is being developed. I shall keep this word of honor. I have already resigned my position, and I am going to Fritz. Who is coming with me?"

One after another stepped up to him and held out his hand. "I too, me and mine as well."

Then the eleven stood about the table, with hands clasped, their eyes shining with inspired hope.

It is eight days later. The steamer *Sierra Ventana* of the North German Lloyd is leaving Bremerhafen. Our eleven friends are on board, six of them with young wives and little children. The steamer is headed out to sea, with the destination Eastern Asia.

Walter Gerhard is holding in his hand a radiogram which he has just received. It reads thus:

"Hurrah! Two of my Zeppelins will be awaiting you at Colombo in Ceylon, Fritz."

The glowing sun is blazing down on the coast of Australia. The scorching heat keeps away all living things. Only over Electropolis for several hours a day there are black clouds.

The *Sierra Ventana* has left the Suez Canal and is steaming across the open sea, toward Colombo.

The eleven and their families are expectantly longing for the end of the voyage. Will the great airships be there? Will they transport their passengers into the land of mystery? Is all this miracle actually true?

Is there a city of machines in the midst of the desert? Is the mighty power plant humming and working away in its subterranean cavern, with all kinds of rays flowing from its wires—this plant, the heart of this miraculous region?

Will they find it, the New Germany of the future?

Will the mysterious land of the iron arms become home to them?

THE END.

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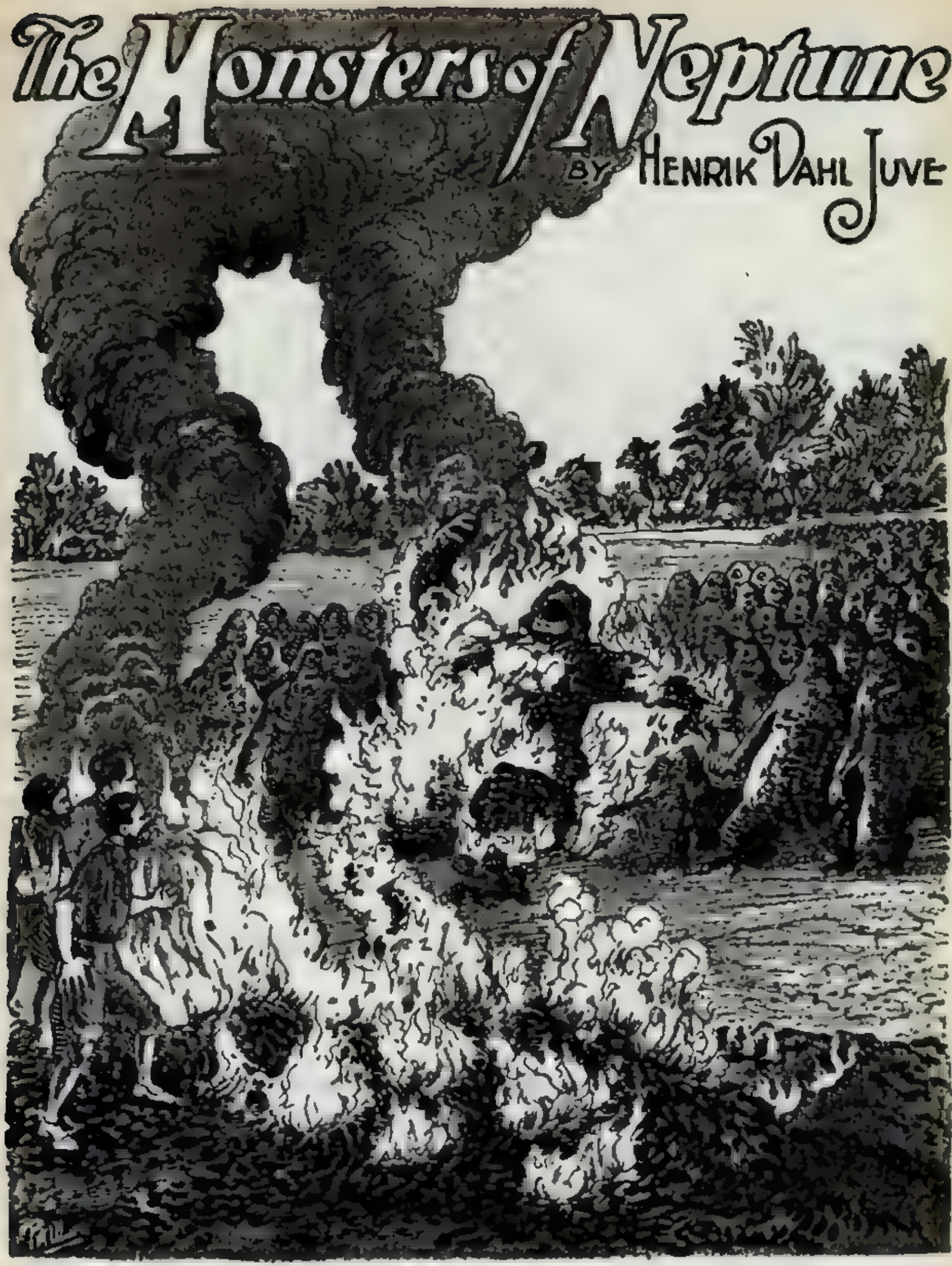
The Monsters of Neptune

BY HENRIK DAHL JUVE



(Illustration by Paul)

But the damage was done. His scales were blazing lustily as he wove drunkenly toward his astonished followers.

By the Author of "The Vanishing Fleet," "Streamers of Death," Etc.

J. P. MANSON, president of the Consolidated Interplanetary Transport Co., was agitated and he expressed it as becomes a gentleman of refinement—he frowned and he blew smoke at his mahogany desk. His ancestors had been pioneers in space travel and they had left him with one of the leading interplanetary freight and passenger lines. Manson himself was a pioneer in that he was the first of his family to abandon the hard and rough life of a pioneer and sit back to an easy life of social prestige and enjoyment. He flecked a bit of ash from his bright yellow silk clothes (a pajama-like affair that was the prevailing fashion of the day) and again frowned carefully.

The door of the richly furnished office opened leisurely. The drone and clatter of the main office contaminated the luxury and dignity of the inner sanctum. A young man walked into the room. With his walking stick he pushed the door to and sauntered over to the desk where he sank into a deep chair. He was clad in a purple suit similar in cut to that of the older man's, but threads of gold were interwoven with the silk to form an intricate pattern. It was the sports model, the campus extreme.

"You sent for me, dad?" he asked as he fitted a cigarette in a jeweled holder and reached for the lighter on the desk.

"Yes, I sent for you! I have come to a decision."

"Really! And how does it affect me? You talk in riddles."

Manson was almost angry. People regarded him in awe but Dana was very complacent and a trifle droll regarding the family bank roll and social power.

"You simply *must* get to work," the older man continued. "You are dragging the name of Manson through the papers. You are considered the laziest dreamer in the city. Even the comic strips are picking you up as good material for ridicule. It has gone too far—you must get to work! Do you understand, WORK?"

Dana leisurely blew a cloud of smoke toward the ceiling. "I understand a lot more than you and the papers give me credit for. I am not lazy at all but I simply haven't found anything that I care to do."

"That is the old excuse—we have been over that before. I have decided to retire and turn over to you the control of the lines. That should give you something to do."

"You retire!" Dana laughed. "But of course you need a vacation. All you do is to take in the money and enjoy life. And now you want me to do the same thing. I'd go crazy. You have been hauling water to the people on Mercury and exchanging it weight for weight for gold. Now you have so much gold here that you are offering prizes to people who can think up new uses for the stuff. You have settled back and are coasting on the energy of our ancestors. Another generation of this kind of control and the name Manson will be in the 'help wanted' columns. No, I don't want to run the outfit."

"What in heaven's name do you want to do, then? Nothing? You are too lazy even to make yourself agreeable in society!"

Dana shrugged. "I don't like the society you talk about. It bores me. What I really want to do is to explore Neptune."

Manson's jaw sagged limply. He stared at his son in startled amazement. Finally he recovered his voice.

"Explore Neptune!" he almost groaned. "Have you gone crazy!"

"Of course not. I have been thinking of it for years. I positively refuse to sit around here and go stale when there is another world to explore. You haul tourists into the very clouds of Neptune but you are afraid to land. I want to land and see what the place looks like."

"Preposterous! I positively refuse to let you go. You know just as well as I that every expedition that ever went there has never come back. They were armed with the latest guns and death rays—but they never came out of the clouds. No, you'll not go!"

"Humph. And if your great grandfather back in 1970 had been afraid to fly to Mars you'd be shoveling snow for a living. What's the difference if I do get killed? Anything is better than this."

HENRIK DAHL JUVE

OUR author seems to improve with each story. In the present interplanetarian story we get the adventures of two explorers on Neptune, one of the little known planets of our solar system.

Mr. Juve has that rare ability of making his story live; for he has studied the atmosphere of the places he writes about and given us that "local color" which is so necessary when describing a strange planet.

The developments of this story may seem to some of us to be humorous, especially when we consider the superstitions of the Neptunians. Yet we modern civilized earthlings, cannot afford to be so superior. For if we were to examine our own habits and customs we might find that we also guide our lives by things just as silly and pointless as those which move the Neptunians.

Our author in this story has not only given us a vivid picture of the life on a planet wholly different than ours, but he has provided a story full of dramatic situations and thrilling adventures.

A Startling Announcement

MANSON sagged in his chair. "I have been afraid of it. I have been afraid that you were a throw-

back, a pioneer, an explorer. I have tried to guard you against the spirit of your ancestors just to keep you out of danger. But I'll keep you out of danger in spite of yourself," he said with unusual bitterness. "I'll not let you go!"

"You'd rather have me sit around here and die of overeating," Dana retorted sarcastically. "No! I want to visit Neptune. I have always felt that that is what I am cut out to do and that is what I want to do."

"No! You take over the business; get married and settle down."

Dana went over to the window and gazed dejectedly out.

"Terriana won't marry me until I do something to show the world that I'm worth my salt," he said bitterly. "And I don't blame her. Even if she were willing her dad would raise the house."

"Terriana isn't the only girl in the world."

"For me she is."

For once the elder Manson fumed without reserve. Dana leaned against the window sill gazing out. His handsome, bold features were clouded with thought. He ran his fingers through his reddish brown hair. Something of triumph stole into his eyes and he turned to his father.

"If I take over the business will you let me run it any way I please?" he asked.

The older man straightened and brightened. "Absolutely! I am glad to hear that you are coming to your senses. You may run it with a high hand or run it onto the rocks; you may divide it up among the employees or give it to the poor. I don't care how you run it and I'll not interfere. I'll sit back and watch your work and say nothing unless you come to me for information or advice."

"All right, I'll take charge right now."

Manson was elated. He called in the two vice-presidents and outlined the arrangement to them. Sour little Drisden, who had had his eye on the president's chair, looked positively ill, but Terriana's father, big, powerful, Lozier, was hearty in his congratulations. He seemed more pleased than Manson himself.

"Now," said Dana, when the surprise and congratulations had subsided, "we'll carry on according to our present policy until I get back."

His indolence had dropped from him like a worn-out cloak and he had become a man of decision and force.

"Get back!" Manson almost shouted. "What do you mean?"

"From Neptune. I am in charge of this transport company now and I am going to Neptune to establish an outpost if there is anything there to warrant our extension."

Again the elder Manson sagged in his chair. The load that had been lifted so suddenly now rested heavier than ever upon his broad shoulders. His face was gray. Lozier was too astonished to speak. Sour little Drisden looked at the president's chair once more and could scarcely keep his face from wrinkling the wrong way. Dana never had liked him.

"If I don't come back," he added, "Lozier will take my place as president."

Drisden left the room.

CHAPTER II

Through the Clouds

THE newspapers were dumbfounded when they learned of Dana's proposed exploration. Terriana was repentant. But in the face of a thousand warnings and pleadings Dana went about his preparations calmly yet persistently. He had advertised for men to accompany him but only one agreed to go. He was "Dutch" Hoss, a stolid, blocky man serving a life sentence in the penitentiary. He was not criminally minded but had made the mistake of hitting too hard a man with a weak heart. He was good natured and slow to anger; but a savage when aroused. Through his influence, Dana had induced the board to parole the man over to him. They had consented on the excuse that it would save the state the expense of keeping him and get him out of the way at the same time.

At last the machine guns and one of the newly-developed death ray machines were mounted in Dana's own sport interplanetary cruiser. With a last farewell to the throng about them they entered the toroidal* flyer and closed the door. While Dana took the controls and turned on the *cosmoray* Dutch sat down and complacently rolled a smoke.

The ship picked up speed rapidly and was soon hurtling through space at full speed; about one tenth the speed of light.

"How long'll it take us to get to Neptune?" Dutch asked between puffs.

"The earth and Neptune are in opposition so the straight line distance is nearly three billion miles but we have to make a wide detour around the sun so it will take us fully four days."

"Four days!" Dutch exclaimed. "But we ain't in a hurry. This beats sitting around in the pen! When do we eat?"

They passed the blazing sun, awe-inspiring despite the many times they had seen the heaving mass. Dutch, who had served as oiler on board one of the Earth-Saturn freighters, knew something about the handling of the ship and was able to relieve Dana at the controls. Thus, for nearly four days the two alternated at the control board, the galley and the sleeping quarters; incidentally, becoming fast friends.

At last the huge, formidable bulk of Neptune loomed, an immense sphere, directly before them. They were now on the edge of explored space. Only the new ninth planet, *Minerva*, about which little was yet known, lay beyond. Dana had thought of visiting the outer planet, but somehow Neptune seemed more attractive. With a feeling of sinister foreboding he viewed the mysterious Neptune, shrouded in a thick blanket of clouds, moving majestically through space, scornful of the puny efforts of man to probe his eternal secret.

Dana took the controls and reduced the speed as they neared the clouds. Cautiously he flew into the first filmy shreds of vapor and then sank at a snail's pace through the impenetrable, dripping bank of fog.

Hour after hour they dropped through the clouds. They could not see more than a few inches beyond the windows so were afraid of striking something. Their descent was little faster than normal landing speed. They had gone through nearly four miles of fog when they noticed that the clouds began to thin. Dana reduced the speed still more and finally they were beneath the envelope and only five hundred feet above the ground. He locked the controls in neutral and the ship hung motionless in the air.

"Come here and look!" Dutch called from one of the

*Shaped like a doughnut. The new flyers were built in this doughnut shape to facilitate the action of the *cosmoray*. The *cosmoray* is a flux similar to magnetism, set up by the action of *electricity D*. Since an extract from the sap of the yucca tree was the only known conductor of *electricity D*, the coils in the ship consisted of copper tubing containing the liquid extract, the tubing serving both as container and insulator. Twenty-two turns of the tubing were laid against the inner wall of the "doughnut." The flux or *cosmoray* set up in this solenoid caused the ship to move in any direction with respect to cosmic rays—according to the operator's selection of flux orientation and polarity.

windows in the bottom of the craft. "Do we have to land in that mess?"

Dana left the control board and peered through the window. A great jungle spread out below them. Huge, almost white trees struggled high into the air while great tangles of thick, heavy vines tried to pull them back. Steam rose from the tangled mass and lost itself in the dank air. It was as if one had lifted a board from the ground and examined the greenish-white vegetation beneath. The whole scene was lighted by a weird, violet light slightly less brilliant than sunlight on the earth, yet brighter than moonlight.

Dana turned off the lights in the ship and dropped closer to the ground. Again he joined Dutch at the window.

Now he noticed a strange thing. The only light in the cabin now came through the window. It shone upon his companion's face and cast over it a ghastly hue. His cheeks and lips were utterly devoid of color. His face had more the appearance of a mass of pasty dough than that of a human countenance.

Dutch looked up. "I don't—" he began and then stopped in amazement. "What's the matter with you! Scared? You look like a corpse!"

Dana laughed. "No, I'm not scared. Your face is no more colorful. That is because no red rays from the sun's light penetrates this atmosphere. What do you think of things?"

"The whole thing looks queer to me; you especially. I get the creeps every time you turn toward me."

"I hope that I don't look any worse than you do—you're terrible."

"But we can't waste our time passing compliments. We'll have to find a place to land. Let's open the door and see what the air is like."

Dana tried to pull the door open but the pressure within the ship was greater than that without and he found that the door was held against the rubber seal with tremendous force. He compared the pressures indicated by the gauges on the control panel and then opened a valve in the side of the ship. The air inside hissed and whistled as it escaped. In a short time the pressures were equalized and he swung the door open. He sniffed the air gingerly at first but could detect no ill effects. It was permeated by a queer, musty odor.

"The air smells like an old, rotten cellar with a new cedar door," he informed Dutch. "Let's find a place to land."

A Strange Land

DANA banged the door shut and again took the controls. They flew along at a three hundred-foot level searching for a suitable place to land. After traveling for perhaps fifty miles over the impenetrable jungle, Dutch, who was on the lookout, spied a rocky opening where there was no vegetation other than a few serpentine vines.

"There's a place," he called. "Swing over a few points to the left—there."

When they were over the spot Dana lowered the ship until they were close to the ground. After locking the controls he examined the terrain, but nothing moved. With a pair of binoculars he scrutinized it more carefully and then searched the surrounding trees, but nothing stirred. The air itself seemed to be stagnant and lifeless.

He returned to the controls and lowered the ship until it rested upon the yellow ground. They opened the door and ventured outside. The air was heavy and oppressive. Despite the dank air they felt strangely light, for their weights were only three-fourths of that on the surface of the earth.

"Boy, I feel young again!" said Dutch. "If we only had some decent air to breathe this wouldn't be such a bad place to live. Where do we go now?"

"I think that we better fly around the planet before we do anything else," said Dana. "We can't get very far in that jungle."

They climbed back into the ship and flew swiftly above the jungle and oceans. The oceans were great bodies of steaming water that lay as motionless as mirrors.

"How big is this place?" Dutch asked when they had flown for an hour and had found little change.

"It's about a hundred thousand miles around," said Dana.

"Gee, there's room for lots of politicians here," Dutch grinned. "And I don't see even a buzzard."

On the side of the planet away from the sun where they had expected to find darkness, they were astonished to find very little points of light. Dana was puzzled and at a complete loss to explain it.

At last, on the shore of a great, placid lake they found a wide clearing. Something had happened to leave it almost devoid of vegetation as far as they could see. There were rocky pinnacles and great rolling hills of solid rock. Near the edge of the jungle a shallow river meandered among the hills and emptied into the lake. Beyond the river the gullies gradually merged with the hill tops to form a plateau.

Dana lowered the ship and settled it gently upon the top of a low hill beyond the river.

"Let's get out here and look around," he suggested. "We'd better take that little machine gun along; or maybe better, the portable death ray."

They opened the locker in which the light gun was kept. The gun was there and in it was a full drum of cartridges but their spare ammunition had been taken out!

"I know that I checked that over carefully!" said Dana in astonishment. "I wonder—"

Quickly he went to the death ray machine and turned it on but the tubes failed to glow. He opened the locker in which spare tubes were kept—but it was empty!

"Of all the dirty—say, I know who did it! If I had Drisden here I'd break him in two!"

"Better be careful—he might have a weak heart," said Dutch. "I hit a skunk once."

"But he has tried to commit murder! I—oh, well, what is the use of crying about it? I'll attend to him when we get back. Come on."

They left the ship and descended the hill. Briskly they walked along a draw that wound around the next hill. Suddenly Dana stopped as if he had forgotten something.

"I know why the light here is so ghastly. The sun shines on the planet like about seven hundred full moons but not much of the light gets through the heavy clouds. Most of the light comes up from the ground and they forgot to send up any red light. Notice that you don't cast a shadow on the ground but if you hold your hand up above your head your hand is in a shadow?"

"A-huh," said Dutch. "That's why they don't have any night here, I 'spose. Wouldn't the electric light company weep?"

They had gone around another hill and were ascending a steep pitch from which they could see the lake. On the distant shore Dana noticed something bright. Steam

billowed into the air as though water were being poured into a furnace.

"Let's go over there," Dana suggested. "It's too far to walk—we'll take the ship."

They began retracing their steps when then heard a faint thump. They stopped to listen. Again they heard the thump.

"Let's hurry," Dana said worriedly. "I wonder what that noise is."

The Great Menace

THEY ran down the hill and around through the draws. As they drew nearer the ship the thumps became louder. There was a metallic sound intermingled. They rounded the last hill and came in sight of their ship. They stared at it aghast and dismayed. It was battered almost beyond recognition!

Cautiously they advanced up the hill, over the snake-like vines and through the pale grass. Dana carried the machine gun in readiness and advanced ahead of Dutch. They heard a loud thump and saw the edge of the ship quiver but they were now on the slope of the hill from where they could not see the other side of their craft. Another thud and the ship danced under the impact.

Dutch flared with anger. He started up the hill at a wild pace, forgetful of all danger.

"Hey!" Dana called. "What is the idea. Wait a minute until we find out what is doing that."

"But they're breaking the ship. I'm going to stop them in their tracks."

"And get stopped! No, you wait until we find out what is there."

They were at the crest of the hill now and peered over. One look and they crouched down behind a rock and stared into each other's pasty faces. Dana felt his blood chill and his face blanch. He wondered how Dutch felt. He recovered himself and slipped the safety catch on the rapid fire gun and poked it up over the rock. He trained the gun upon the monster.

A huge, pale violet-grey, gorilla-like beast stood poised above the remains of the ship. It was more bulky than any elephant. Its powerful body was covered with great slab-like scales that rattled with the least motion. Its wide, ugly head, covered with scales, was frightful. The one eye in the center of its forehead gleamed yellow-violet light of hate and triumph.

Dana was paralyzed before this apparition. He tried to squeeze the trigger but he could not move.

In his powerful arms the monster held a boulder that weighed half a ton or more. Slowly, with a loud rattle of scales, he raised it in his herculean hands until it was high above his head.

"Shoot him!" Dutch almost screamed. "Shoot!"

As if another were doing it, Dana pressed the trigger. The gun jerked and rattled with deafening explosions. The angry steel nosed bullets struck sparks on the thick scales but the beast paid not the slightest heed.

With a mighty heave the Neptunian brought the boulder down upon the ship. The rock struck with a clanking thud. Bits of debris flew. The already useless ship was flattened still more. Again Dana fired a burst at the center of the beast and again the sparks flew. The creature, aroused at last, began looking about for the source of the annoyance. He spied the two behind the boulder and charged.

Dana felt his blood congeal. He fired several desperate bursts at the encoming mountain of heaving scales but he might as well have been firing a pop gun. Their antagonist came on, Dana could neither move nor run. He was hypnotized by the destruction bearing down upon them. The one yellow eye of blazing hate held him transfixed.

"In the eye!" Dutch screamed. "Shoot him in the eye!"

Mechanically Dana raised the gun and again pressed the trigger. The beast merely shook its gargantuan head and came on. Frantically Dana again took aim. The monster was now but twenty feet from them and towering like an invincible army tank. For the fourth time Dana put the gun to its utmost. It was the last desperate struggle and it steadied him. The bullets stitched a row of sparks across the hideous face and drew closer to that blazing eye. Desperately he held the trigger down and guided the chattering stream of steel across the monster's forehead. Suddenly the blazing yellow eye went dead; the light went out.

CHAPTER III

Into the Jungle!

THE monster stopped abruptly with a terrible shriek of pain and surprise. It halted, emitted another deafening bellow that reverberated among the hills and then pitched to the ground with a thud that fairly shook the rocks. He lay there threshing about, kicking rocks and boulders in every direction.

Trembling and weak the two stared at their dead foe. Dutch lapsed into profanity but Dana merely stared.

"Listen!" Dana hissed suddenly. "Sh-h."

Far in the distance they could hear answering shrieks and bellows. They stared at each other with a groan. They listened intently and could hear the throb of many heavy feet and knew that others were coming rapidly. The very ground trembled under the impact like the rumble of a freight train.

Hopelessly they looked at their ship but it was ground and battered beyond recognition.

"To the jungle!" Dana yelled. "We can't fight the whole herd!"

The edge of the jungle was about two miles away and they set out as fast as they could travel. They had gone down into a valley, across the small river and topped another hill before they looked back. The great herd was just drawing up to the remains of the ship. They estimated that there were over two hundred of the gruesome, violet-grey monsters. While they rested they watched the Neptunians. They could hear the turmoil of clattering scales and bellowing voices.

The beasts first attacked what was left of the ship. They threw hundreds of great boulders upon it and then lifted it up on edge and rolled it down the hill. Faster and faster the flattened doughnut rolled until it suddenly broke into a shower of fragments. Then one of the grotesque creatures saw the Earth things. There was a screech and the whole band broke into an uproar. Four of them seized the carcase of their dead companion and the entire troop came in hot pursuit amid a rattling chaos and a cloud of steam.

"Run!" Dana cried in terror. "Can we make it?"

Dutch had become stolid again now that the frightful creatures were still far off.

"We can try," he grinned. "What's the difference if we make it or not? They'll get us sooner or later."

They broke into a run toward the tangled forest. The beasts, seeing them escaping, came on thunderously in full cry. The ground rumbled with their heavy running and the air rattled and vibrated from their clattering scales and deafening voices.

Gradually the herd gained upon them. They aban-

doned caution and rushed wildly across the damp, rocky ground. When they were within three hundreds yards of the sheltering jungle Dana glanced back. The thundering horde was less than two hundred yards behind and gaining rapidly!

"We can't make it!" he gasped. "I'm going to—throw away—the gun. It's about—empty, anyway."

Without waiting for an answer he dropped the gun. He felt nude and helpless without the weapon but he ran easier and faster without the burden. There was an increased uproar behind and he glanced back. The beasts has stopped to demolish the gun.

"Hurry!" he yelled between gasps. "They're grinding up—the gun."

They gained the thicker underbrush and found it crossed and recrossed by many paths. Selecting one of these they staggered on. Abruptly they were up to the tangled mass of jungle. Each of the paths entered a great hole in the confused growth. They plunged into one of these holes and found themselves in a steaming, dripping, perspiring tunnel. The rich, yellow soil of the path was trampled by thousands of cumbersome feet into a soft mud. There was an abrupt turn in the tunnel and Dana glanced back as he rounded it. The first of the beasts were just entering the opening.

"Quick!" he gasped. "Crawl out—of the path—here they come."

They found a space between a huge tree and the tangle of vines and squeezed into it. They pushed and pried their way around the tree and crouched trembling and gasping beside the almost white trunk. They had scarcely hidden themselves when the first of the grotesque beings clattered by. They were closely followed by the four carrying the dead animal and then an almost endless chain of rattling scales and thundering, splashing feet. Yellow mud sloshed up against and around their tree until they were drenched.

What Now?

THE last of the stragglers rattled by and the procession lost itself in the depths of the jungle. While they recovered their breaths they listened to the sound of the monsters as it grew fainter in the distance.

Dutch shoved some vines out of his way and lay down flat on his back. He wiped the perspiration from his face with the back of his hand and proceeded to roll a smoke.

"Well," he said as he moistened the edge of the brown paper, "Mr. President of the Consolidated Interplanetary Transport Company, where do we go from here?"

Dana did not answer. He was thinking of Terriana. He wondered if she was worrying about him—he hoped so.

"Is there any chance of someone coming to help us?" Dutch persisted. "If someone forgets to come for us we'll have to get acquainted with the natives and pretend that we like it."

Dana shook his head. "There isn't a chance in a million. You couldn't hire anyone to come here and even if someone did how could they find us? It would be about like flying over the state of California looking for a needle someone dropped. Dad might try to come but I don't think that mother would let him. She'd tell him that one lost from the family is enough. No, it'll be just like it was with the others. The telenewspapers will buzz for awhile and then they'll make room for the next sensation and forget all about us. We'll have to do our own worrying."

Dutch drew deeply at his cigarette. "Oh, well, we should worry. This is no worse than sitting around in the pen."

"Say!" Dana flared angrily. "Are you kidding or are you just plain dumb?"

Dutch grinned a pasty-faced grin that was ghastly in the weird light. "I 'spose it all depends on how much you lose. Me—"he shrugged, "all I'm losing is a cot and a lot of steel scenery."

Dana dug his heel savagely in the wet, yellow dirt. He looked about the putrid tangle of dripping, steaming trees and vines, the dead ones of which were decaying in mid air. He decided that he would have to do his own thinking. Perhaps the companionship of Dutch would keep him from going insane if the man did not drive him crazy with his stolid, fateful indifference.

"If I had something to eat now," Dutch continued, "I'd fill up and then sleep awhile. My big worry comes around three times a day. Did you ever get real hungry; and nothing in sight?"

"Will you shut up!" Dana almost shrieked. "Don't we have enough trouble without your rubbing it in?"

But Dutch's suggestion was practical. Dana began to worry about what they could eat in this land of plenty. The more he thought about it the more convinced he was that there was only one course open to them.

"We had better follow that herd and watch them," he said. "We can probably live on the same kind of stuff they eat. If we begin experimenting we might eat something that's poisonous."

CHAPTER IV

The Grotto of the Beasts

HOUR after hour they traveled through the mud splashed tunnel. There were many criss-crossed paths but they had no difficulty in following the herd for the path they had used was newly churned and the sides of the tunnel were dripping with ocher mud. At last they heard faintly the sound of rattling scales and the bellowing of voices far in the distance. They advanced more cautiously now for they were afraid of ambush or an outpost.

At last they came to a turn in the tunnel and could hear that the cavalcade was just ahead. Dana peered cautiously around the bend and drew back quickly.

"The whole band is around there in a clearing. I thing that they're resting and eating. Let's see if we can burrow out of the tunnel and get ringside seats."

They searched the matted sides of the tunnel until they found a place where the vegetation was not so heavy and wormed their way through. There was no danger of their presence being detected through any sound they made for the din of the Neptunians was deafening. At last they arrived near the edge of the clearing and could plainly see the monsters.

They were eating and the two visitors watched carefully. Several of the great animals had swung into the nearby trees with the agility of monkeys. From their position they dropped fruit to others below. There were several varieties that they ate. The fruit was pale green or pale yellow their coloring being so slight that they were almost white. There seemed to be one favorite, a bean-like affair of a yellow tint and about ten feet long. There was one hanging from a vine near Dutch's head and they opened it. Inside they found twenty soft meated, flat, white fruits. They were some five inches in diameter and two inches thick. Dana tasted the fruit. It was juicy and delicious, tasting

something like a combination of apricots and strawberries.

Dana ate a little as an experiment but Dutch ate freely.

"Better not eat too much to start with," Dana warned. "We'll know more about how it agrees with us after awhile."

"It tastes fine—I should worry about what happens."

Dana shrugged. Dutch was impossible to reason with. They tried other fruits which they had seen the natives eat and found them good. One in particular interested Dana. It was a nearly transparent, clear globe about ten inches in diameter which hung from a vine like a great drop of dew. He bit into one and was almost drowned in the sweet, fragrant juice.

At last the Neptunians went on the march again. Four of them picked up the dead member of their herd and clanked into a tunnel opening into the far side of the open space. When they were out of sight Dana and his companion started after them.

"I don't see what we are following them for any longer," said Dana. "We know what they eat so can live without them. Still, if we watch them we can find out more about them. If we have to live here the rest of our lives we had better learn all we can about their habits."

For hours they followed the noisome procession. On the earth it would have been several days. Still the Neptunians continued deeper into the jungle. As they progressed they found the jungle becoming denser until no light filtered in from the translucent cloud above. The only illumination now was the ghastly, violet light from the ground.

They had followed for six "sleeps," as Dutch put it —for there were no days and nights—when they noticed that the din ahead became louder.

Cautiously they advanced but they found that they were several miles away. As they drew nearer they noticed that the sound came in a definite rhythm as though the beasts were keeping time. The ground shook under the thump of countless and massive feet. At last they came upon the assembled horde and concealed themselves in the dense foliage.

Before them opened a vast amphitheater or grotto. The room was at least three hundred feet across. The dome-shaped ceiling was a hundred feet high in the center and composed of living, dripping vines. Not even a pencil of light found its way through the dense matting. In the center lay the dead Neptunian and around it danced the vast herd. It was a grotesque dance of rattling scales and thumping feet. To one side eight of the monsters beat time by bumping great hollow logs with heavy rocks. The ghastly light came from the ground and cast a weird shadow dance of distorted shapes on the ceiling of the grotto.

The Mystery of the Light

THEY watched the thunderous dance for two hours when there was a sudden change in the rhythm of the drums. The dance speeded up and then the entire herd broke into line and filed away through an opening in the wall while another troop of dancers came into the grotto and resumed the bacchanalian contortions.

"Looks like only part of 'em chased us," Dutch shouted above the din. "What's it all about?"

"Probably a wake," said Dana. "They aren't animals but savages."

They resumed their observation of the ponderous dance when Dana noticed something that had escaped his attention before. Near one edge of the grotto he saw a tiny red light that gleamed steadily in the ghastly violet light. He was puzzled when he noticed that all the beasts or savages carefully avoided the light, refusing to go nearer to it than fifty feet. At the left edge of this forbidden circle stood one of the Neptunians as motionless as a statue.

"See that red spot over there?" he asked Dutch. "There—no, right over beyond that fellow with a crooked nose."

"Oh, yes, now I see it. What's it for?"

"How should I know? Let's go over and find out."

They started through the maze of vines and underbrush but came upon one of the tunnels. The ground was literally covered by the monsters lying in the steaming mud evidently resting.

"We'll have to wait until they change shifts," Dutch said. "Let's go back."

They crawled back to their former position and watched the proceedings.

"I'd like to know what that red light is for," Dana mused. "And why is that native standing over there?"

The visitors indulged in another of their "sleeps" to the tune of booming logs, rattling scales and thundering feet. Still the grotesque wake continued.

"Wish I was selling tickets for this dance," Dutch grinned. "I'd charge so much a ton."

"If you were I suppose you'd buy lots somewhere around here with the proceeds and settle down," Dana retorted. "I'd give everything I own for an old second hand spaceflyer right now."

Dutch snorted. "How do you figure that you own anything on the earth when you're settled down here for life. Forget it."

"That's right but don't rub it in too much—it's all in how much you lose, you said."

"Sure, but we are stuck here and we might as well face the music. I have been thinking that I was wrong. It doesn't really make any difference how much you lose. Whether you lose a nickel or half the world—what's the difference?"

"I wasn't thinking of money," Dana said sadly.

They lapsed into silence and listened to the nerve-racking, monotonous thump, thump, rattle, rattle. Again there was a sudden change in the time and rhythm of the dance. They looked up to watch any new developments. Tunnels poured out their inhabitants until the grotto was filled. There were hundreds of the scaly monsters. Although the grotto was crowded they all carefully avoided that red light.

The dance became wilder and wilder. They seemed to be working themselves into a frenzy. As the dance speeded up the clatter became deafening and the ground jarred with the heavy thump of stamping feet. The monsters grew frantic, swaying to the hollow-log time, the crowd milling about the dead member.

Suddenly the thumping ceased and the milling herd came to an abrupt halt. For a moment they stood motionless as if recovering their balance. A moment of this silence and then the mob quivered; a wave of bellowing swept over them and a deadly rattle of scales. As one they rushed toward the carcass. They were upon the dead member when one of the foremost suddenly drew himself up over the heads of the others and ran over the top of the solidly packed herd.

"What's he think he's going to do?" Dutch asked tensly.

Dana was awed by this strange ceremony. He did not answer but watched the lone member leap from the

heads of the others and rush to the red light. Quickly he seized the miniature torch and with a loud bellow he ran toward the thundering crowd. The others drew back, clearing a path for him. He waved the light, the only spark of red in this ghastly violet land, and the mob drew farther back as in awe and reverence. As with a magic wand he cleared a wide circle about the dead member, danced around it three times and then set the sceptre upright in the ground.

Another Human!

WITH his great thumbless hands he tore the carcass open and took out the heart which he held up for all to see. Again he went through some meaningless ceremonies, seized the little red-tipped wand and went toward the edge of the grotto through the wide lane that opened for him. He set the light where he had found it and disappeared into one of the tunnels, carrying his extra heart with him.

Again the crowd fell upon the dead member and after a few minutes of wild confusion they drew away, leaving nothing but a scattered litter of scales and bluish grey bones.

"U-uh!" said Dana. "They eat their own dead! I wonder why all the ceremony."

"What I'm wondering is what they'd do to us if they caught us."

Dana shuddered. "I had that figured out long ago. I'd rather try to figure out why all the ceremony and why the long wait before they ate that dead one."

"Probably waiting for the scales to loosen," Dutch suggested.

"For the—wait, what is this?"

The one who had eaten the heart came out of his tunnel and stood behind the red-tipped wand. The herd stood in awe and respect. In a loud voice the one addressed the many. Several times he bellowed, changing the pitch of his voice from high screeches to low gutturals. The speech was short and evidently to the point for scarcely had he ceased when the herd broke up and scattered through the many tunnels. Several gathered up the debris of scales and bones and carried them into a tunnel. The mighty one picked up his torch, called a band of about seventy-five and led them into another tunnel. Slowly the clatter and thunder died away in the distance. Only one remained in the vast grotto—the guard.

"Now we can crawl around there and see what that guard is doing," Dana suggested.

"It's sure a funny outfit," said Dutch.

"Not so queer," Dana objected. "When people from Mars came to the earth for the first time they thought that we were the strangest things they could imagine and we thought the same about them. Now we don't think anything about it because we're used to them and have adopted some of their customs. These monsters, if they think at all, probably think that we are queer little animals with silly habits."

"I 'spose you're right. Let's go."

Now that the crashing din had ceased they had to move with extreme caution. Carefully they burrowed through the almost impenetrable tangle of vines, making a wide detour and coming up behind the guard. They worked with the infinite patience of prisoners who have a lifetime in which to burrow through a stone wall or cut through a bar. They drew nearer the grotto and could hear the scales of the guard chattering as he shifted his position. Presently they stopped, finding their way blocked by great logs piled up to form a wall or crib. They could see the guard now through the mass of vines.

Dana peered through the chinks in the log crib and then stared at Dutch in amazement.

"Look in there," he whispered softly.

Dutch put an eye to one of the chinks and stared. Astonishment was written all over his pasty face.

"A man!" he gasped. "One just like us!"

Dana tapped lightly on the log. The man inside listened, staring about to find out where the sound came from. Dana tapped again and put his lips to the chink.

"Sh-h," he hissed. "Right over here—in back."

The man, who had been sitting in a dejected heap, straightened up and tiptoed eagerly to the back of the crib.

"Who are you?" Dana demanded in a soft whisper.

"Never mind formalities now," the man said eagerly. "There is no time to lose—that is, if you want to get me out of here."

"Of course we do," Dana whispered. "But how can we get by that guard?"

"You can't," the man whispered. "Listen carefully. They made the floor of this prison out of logs so I couldn't burrow out. But there is a weak place on the right side. If you could find a pole about four feet long I could pry the logs apart and get out. And whatever you do, don't make a noise!"

They withdrew from the prison some distance and began cutting a pole. Whittling through the three-inch stick with their pocket knives was arduous labor but at last they had a serviceable pry pole. They crept back to the crude cell and passed the stick through the crack to the stranger.

"Fine," he whispered. "That is made to order. I'll try to force the logs apart without making a noise but you better come around to the right wall to give me assistance in case of trouble."

CHAPTER V

The Escape

DANA and Dutch crept around the side of the building and waited. They saw the end of the pole protrude from the side and held their breaths. Gradually the strain came on and one of the logs moved ever so little. Again the man pried and the log moved a little more. Once more he pried, a little harder this time. The log moved slightly and then suddenly fell out of the wall and to the ground with a crash of underbrush. At the same time they heard the guard rattling up to investigate.

"Hurry!" the man yelled. "Help me through!"

Together they grasped his arms and dragged him through the narrow opening just as the monster entered the door. Now the vines which had befriended them became a menace. Before they could draw away from the wall into the tangled brush the Neptunian reached a great scaly arm through the opening and grasped the stranger's arm in its huge, four fingered claw. They heard the dull, sickening snap of breaking bones.

"Run for your lives!" The stranger screamed with pain and fright. "I'm lost—run!"

The other plated arm was coming out of the prison and grasping for Dutch. He tried frantically to force his way through the vines but he had no time. The groping claw paused a moment as though the monster inside were changing his position. He had put his eye to the chink.

Dana stared for a moment, too horrified to move. He drew himself together when he saw the monster arm

again seeking Dutch. The ugly, one-eyed face was pressed close to the opening, the yellow eye gleaming with unutterable hate. That baleful glare was almost hypnotic. Dana forced his gaze away from the hideous stare and searched frantically for some weapon. The pole! It was still leaning against the bottom of the opening.

Dana became all action in a moment. He seized the pole and jabbed it with terrific force into the glaring yellow eye. Inches it went into the monster's head, grating and crunching. There was a frightful bellow from within the prison and the beast's hand relaxed its hold upon the stranger's arm. It ran about blindly within the log house, tearing down the logs in a wild confusion.

Quickly the three drew back into the jungle to escape the heaving logs.

"Hurry!" gasped the man. "Get into the open and then run for a tunnel. We'll have to get as far away from here as we can—they'll come in a little while."

Dutch and Dana helped the injured man through the brush. His broken arm dangled limply and impeded his progress. They gained the grotto and ran toward one of the tunnels.

"This one," the stranger cried. "Have to go this way anyway."

They penetrated deep into the jungle and then burrowed into the tangle beside the path. They cleared a space and lay down to rest.

"We better set this arm," said Dana when they had recovered their breaths.

They found both bones between the elbow and wrist broken and ugly bruises where the monster's powerful fingers had dug into the flesh. They set the bones as best they could and bound up the arm with splints and strips of cloth torn from their shirts. They fashioned a sling from more of their ragged shirts. As they worked Dana plied the patient with questions.

"My name is Dana Manson," he said. "We were only exploring around."

The man winced and grinned at the same time.

"I have heard of you," he said. "I am Dr. Gailman of, I suppose, the ill-fated Gailman-Turner expedition. The others of the party were eaten but the brutes were saving me for some special occasion."

"Dr. Gailman! Then you have been here almost a year!" Dana was incredulous. "But we can talk about that later. What have you found out about these monsters? That's what we are eager to know."

Dr. Gailman patted his bandaged arm gingerly. "Plenty to last me a long time," he grinned. "They aren't animals in a sense. They have a language and superstitions just as we have, although theirs are very crude. But I have never seen them so thoroughly aroused as they were over the death of their king."

"Their king! Was that dead one their king?"

"Yes. As soon as they had eaten him and the new king had crowned himself he ordered the tribe to scatter throughout the jungle to find something or other—I couldn't catch it—You see, while I was penned up there I listened to their bellowing and grunting until I finally picked up a word. It took me six months to get that word. After that I learned faster until I can understand them fairly well. I sometimes conversed with the guard.

"Then it was the big boss we shot," Dutch said with a heave of satisfaction.

"Shot!" Dr. Gailman groaned. "No wonder they were agitated. Now we *are* confronted by serious problems!"

The Chase

"LET us hear some more about the monsters," said Dana. "The more we know the easier it'll be to combat them. What about that red light? It puzzled me."

"That red light is a puzzle. I have studied about it for days at a time. I fancy that it is a crystal which becomes fluorescent when the violet light shines upon it and glows with an induced light that is red. That is the only explanation I have ever come upon. At any rate, the natives are afraid of it and never go near it. When the king dies the new king is chosen by the simple expedient of electing the one who is not afraid of the light. I suppose one of them believes that he is the one and overcomes his fear. I have come to the conclusion that it is like an earthly big sword or big stick or crown or other mark of authority or reverence. When a man has courage to grasp it he finds it harmless. If he is still superstitious he believes himself superior; if not he merely winks up his sleeve and dictates to the rest."

"If we could get that red light we could rule the place," Dana suggested.

"We'd be monarchs. They would keep away from our superior selves and take our orders like slaves. But the king took the light. The old king used to leave it stuck upright before his den but the new one probably feels like carrying his new toy."

"I have noticed that there are no other animals on the planet," said Dana. "I wonder how that happened."

"I have wondered too. I believe that these monsters have eaten them all and are the sole survivors. They seem to be famished for meat and so eat their dead."

They heard the clatter of scales and the faint bellowing of the monsters. There were answering bellows. The sound drew nearer. Dr. Gailman listened intently.

"They are coming in answer to the call of the guard," he said presently. "Now they *will* be upset."

They lapsed into silence as the monsters galloped by. They were drawing in from every direction. Presently they were assembled in the grotto and the three fugitives could hear the new king giving orders while others interrupted him.

"They want to eat the dead guard and the king is telling them that they will have to find us first," said Gailman. "They'll search frantically until they find us. Their appetite for meat is almost like the craving for narcotics—I'm surprised that he dares deny them."

Again they heard the confusion of hundreds of the monsters departing in chase. Through the tangled vines the three men could see the approaching throng. The king, holding his scepter above his head, came first, followed by about seventy-five subjects. Evidently the others had scattered throughout the maze of tunnels. Presently the last of the king's troop had clattered by and the din began to fade in the distance.

"I have been wondering about that violet light," said Dana. "It seems to come out of the ground."

"It does," said Gailman. "We landed on a large clearing on the shore of a large lake north of here. There was a place where the steam was denser than usual. We stopped to investigate and found that it came from almost pure radium. I fancy that the ground is full of it and that spot was an outcropping. I have come to the conclusion that the particles from the radium induce a fluorescent condition in the soil that causes the violet light."

"Radium! Radium—" Dana exclaimed and mused. "Listen—will a death ray affect the brutes?"

"No. That is how we were captured. We tried the death ray but they came right on as if nothing had happened."

Dana turned to Dutch. "Perhaps Drisden saved our lives by taking our good tubes and ammunition. I better not be too hard on him."

"If you ever see him again," Dutch suggested.

But Dana had relapsed into thought and did not hear him. He was trying to figure some means of controlling the native forces, if not put them to work. He visioned an outpost with valuable cargoes of radium being transported to the earth over the lines of his company. He pictured the revolutionary developments in the power equipment of those on the earth.

"But," he groaned aloud, "we are stranded so there's no chance."

"What's that?" demanded Gailman. "Stranded? Not if we can keep out of sight and if they have not discovered my ship—and I'm sure that they haven't. When we were captured the ship was rather effectively concealed."

Dana almost hugged him. "You mean that your ship may be in condition to fly? Then we must go at once!"

"The ship is probably in condition to fly but remember that the natives are between us and the ship. It's up to us to keep in condition to fly."

Toward the Space Ship

FOR days in this dayless land they crept through the tunneled jungle. Occasionally they heard searchers and were forced to abandon the tunnel and hide in the tangled vines. They were near the edge of the clearing after one of Dutch's "sleeps" when Dana picked up one of the scales which had dropped in the path. It was about ten inches in diameter and over two inches thick. He examined it carefully. It was made up of an oily substance intermixed with a hard, flint-like mineral. Evidently it was oily to turn the persistent dripping water of the jungle. He tried cutting it with his pocket knife but found it too hard to yield more than a fine shaving from the thin edge. From this he deduced that the oil penetrated entirely through.

"This stuff would make a valuable source of oil," he suggested.

"That's right," said Dutch. "Anything to make more shipping for your precious lines. Me—my worry comes only three times a day."

Dana shrugged but did not utter the retort that was on the end of his tongue. The fact that his companion accused him of thinking of his air lines when he was really thinking of Terriana did not bother him.

The jungle was becoming thinner. A few more miles and they would be in the clearing. They sat down to rest.

"We shall have to be very careful now," said Gailman. "There is no shelter in the clearing and if we are seen we shall all perish."

Dutch rolled a smoke. "Let's stay here," he said, settling himself comfortably. "This beats sitting around in the pen."

Dana snorted. "Now I know you're crazy."

"It all depends on how much you lose. As I said before, all I lose is a cot and a lot of steel scenery."

They resumed their march and relapsed into silence. Gradually the jungle thinned until concealment was difficult and they were forced to keep large trees in mind in case one of the pursuers should come. They crept along more cautiously than ever. They ran from tree to tree, pausing at each stop to listen for the clatter or bellow of the chase. At last they were at the edge of the tangle of vines and peered cautiously out upon the barren hills.

A faint glow filtered throug from the clouds, mixing some normal light with the violet that came from the ground, making the effect less weird and gruesome than in the dense jungle. Far in the distance they could see the steam rising from the outcropping of radium.

They listened carefully but heard nothing.

"My ship is over in that steam," said Gailman. "The clearing seems to be deserted—I suppose we might as well make a dash for the craft."

"If it would only get dark here we could wait until night," said Dana.

"But it won't," said Dutch. "Let's go."

They broke away from the jungle, running at an easy trot that covered the ground rapidly and noiselessly. They skirted a low hill and felt safer when they had put it between them and the jungle. They rested in the shelter for a few minutes and then continued winding around the low hills.

"How much farther do we have to go?" Dana asked after an hour of travel in the open.

"We are about half way there," said Gailman. "The river we crossed is about a fourth of the way as I recall. There is a big heap of scales, sort of a burying ground for the scales and bones, near the ship. It is almost as large as one of these hills. Watch for it. Then we'll know where the ship is."

They continued their flight over the rough valleys. Since crossing the river the ground had been rising rapidly. Gradually the valleys became more shallow and finally they found themselves on a plateau. They looked back. It was as if the water had cut up the plateau into numerous hills and valleys. Far behind they could see the violet-white edge of the jungle. Dana suddenly leaned forward and strained his eyes toward one of the hilltops.

"What is that?" he asked, pointing out a hill about half way between them and the jungle.

Trapped!

THEY looked at the object silhouetted against the leaden sky. Faintly they heard a blood-chilling bellow and saw the statue move. As they watched other figures joined it until there were perhaps seventy-five. They could hear the bellowing voices and then the rattle of scales as the band started in their direction. They saw others coming out of the jungle and taking up the pursuit.

"Now we'll have to run!" Dana shouted. "Gailman, you lead the way since you know where to go."

Swiftly they ran over the plateau, perspiration streaming down their faces, while the clatter and bellowing became louder and louder, spurring them to frenzied effort. They sighted the pile of scales which was their landmark. Just beyond they could see the great clouds of steam from the radium outcropping. Presently Gailman, weakened from long confinement and his broken arm, began to lag.

"You go on," he gasped. "No use for all of us—to die. If I stay behind—they'll stop to eat me—and you can get away. The ship is hidden—just inside that column of steam."

"No!" Dana cried. "Either we all go or we all stay. Here Dutch, help and we'll give Gailman a lift."

One ran at each side of the weary doctor and seized the legs of his trousers, assisting him along. The race

became a torture for Dana and Dutch, burdened as they were. Their lungs pained them as they sucked in great sobs of stale air. Still the monsters gained.

"We can't make it," Gailman groaned. "I command you to abandon me. That is the only way—to save yourselves."

"Command—nothing!" Dana gasped. "Run a little faster. Not far—to go."

They gained the pile of scales. It formed a low hill, the accumulation of centuries. The edge of the rising column of steam was still half a mile in the distance and the beasts were only a quarter of a mile behind them. Gailman collapsed.

"You must go on," Gailman choked. "In the interest of science. You have the key to the situation here. You know that they have a superstitious fear of red light. Use it. You must go and leave me. They'll stop here long enough for you to make it."

"No," said Dana. "We all go or we all stay."

"Fool," Gailman almost sobbed. "Can't you see that that is your only chance and while we argue they come. It is better that I die than that all three of use be killed. Go!"

"No! Why should you die instead of either of one of us. Why shouldn't I stay here and you and Dutch go on?"

The beasts were coming in great leaps, their cries tinged with a note of savage triumph. Swiftly they covered the ground, their powerful feet hammering the damp, rocky soil with jarring force, their scales rattling in unison. Already they had sped over half the intervening distance. The three watched the oncoming horde, helpless and fascinated as with the approach of a thundering freight train. A few minutes and they would be ground out of existence. In the lead ran the king, holding his red-tipped scepter high in the air.

With a great effort Dana tore his eyes away from the scene that held him like a magnet.

"If only I had that red light!" He thought with flashing swiftness. "Red light—red—"

Saved by Red

WITH a savage jerk Dana pulled Dutch around and out of his openmouthed fascination.

"Quick!" he shouted. "Shave off some of the edge of these scales—start a fire."

With trembling hands they opened their pocket knives and cut little shavings from the thin edges of several scales. These they heaped up and Dutch took out his waterproof match box. His fingers shook as he struck a match and held it under the shavings. A drop of water from the ever dripping scales struck the tiny flame. It sputtered and went out.

"There's only one match left," Dutch groaned. "You light it."

Dana became calm and steady in his desperation. He forgot the thundering horde; he forgot their danger; he concentrated his every attention upon the tiny flame. He added the burned out match to the first to increase the size of the fire. He thrust the flame under the little heap of shavings and carefully held it. A tiny spurt of red fire, a frying sound and gradually the fire spread throughout the heap of shavings. A little thread of black smoke rose from the tinder. Carefully he placed the edges of scales over the fire and the oil burst into flame. He added others. The fire became hot and boiled the oil out of the scales. They sputtered and shot blasts of fire like tiny blow torches. The flames spread rapidly to other scales.

Dana drew back. Suddenly he became conscious of the thunder of the approaching horde. He spun around. They were but a few hundred feet away. On they came, the king bellowing orders and waving his scepter. The fire behind the fugitives was becoming a roaring furnace of fierce oil.

At fifty feet the monsters hesitated, for here was a red light much larger than they had ever seen. Even the king hesitated. Then he looked at his magic spark of red crystal and came on again.

Dana seized Gailman and Dutch.

"Up the heap!" he shouted.

They ran around the fire and climbed desperately up the shifting scales. They paused above the fire and behind the screen of greasy black smoke.

"You think it's better to roast alive!" asked Dutch in amazement and terror.

The smoke shifted and they could see the king coming at them. Straight into the blazing furnace he ran.

"He thinks that he has overcome the superstitious dread of anything that is red!" Gailman shouted. "He is shouting his greatness to the herd. He thinks that he is a super monster! He is invincible now that he has winked once."

But the king was bellowing in pain and surprise. He backed out of the fire but the damage was done. His scales were blazing lustily as he wove drunkenly toward his astonished followers. They drew back in awe and terror. The king's bellows became louder and more agonized and then began to weaken. He was drunk with his new-found might. The living torch staggered a few more steps and then collapsed; his own funeral pyre.

In his wild contortions the king had dropped his scepter. Dutch, never greatly awed, slid down the oily scales and ran to the symbol of power. He seized the red crystal and waved it in the faces of the monsters. They drew back in obedience and respect. Dana and Gailman slid down the heap that they might watch him better for the smoke and heat was now almost unbearable.

* * *

When Dutch returned his eyes blazed with a new light. He had lost his almost bovine contentment in the realization of new power.

"Say, Dana," he said smiling, "are you going to establish a post in this planet?"

"Yes. I feel now that I am justified in taking whatever money and power may come to me since I shall revolutionize power and transportation on the earth. As soon as I get back to earth I'll begin on a new and greater organization."

"Fine," said Dutch. "I am going to stay here and make these brutes feed me. This beats sitting around in a pen."

"Then I'll put you in charge of the diggings here," Dana laughed. "What shall I send for the project?"

"I'll turn these boys into tractors and steam shovels but I'll need hand picks and shovels—and extra heavy ones too. Better send a gun that shoots liquid fire in case anyone gets it into his head that this crystal ain't magic. And I'll need a jail made of pretty heavy armor plate in case any of my men think they can get out of work. And say, don't forget to send matches and smokes."

Dana, still trembling from the reaction, wanted to laugh hysterically, but he controlled himself.

"I'll probably think of at least ten ship loads of stuff," he smiled. "But we must be on our way—so long."

King Dutch waved his tribe back to the jungle and Dana and Gailman started immediately for the hidden space ship.

"Isn't it strange," said Dana musingly after they had entered the steam and found the ship unmolested, "how one puny man can control great and powerful groups after he has overcome his fear of their particular superstitions? Superstition is the whip that binds the races and makes giants cringe. One man could rule the whole world if he could invent a new superstition they'd all fear yet occasionally violate."

"Huh?" Gailman started from deep thought. "I beg your pardon, but I really was not following you. Confidentially, I'm worried. I have been away from hom long time and I'm wondering what sort of excu satisfy the wife."

THE END

For the Fall, 1930, Wonder Stories Quarterly

WE PRESENT

"BETWEEN EARTH AND MOON"

By OTFRID VON HANSTEIN

The author of "Electropolis," whose complete novel appears in this issue of the quarterly, has recently completed a new book entitled "BETWEEN EARTH AND MOON," which is one of the most up-to-date and remarkable interplanetarian stories that has been published to date.

Mr. Von Hanstein not only has the literary ability to write a remarkable story, but he is a story teller of that kind who never allows you to become bored for a moment. As in "ELECTROPOLIS," the author has spun a tremendous tale of science mixed with thrilling adventures that fairly take away your breath. The story not only created a sensation in Germany, where it was first published, but it was cause for such a well-known scientist as Prof. Otto Baschin, the geographical authority and polar explorer of the University of Berlin, to write the author the following letter:

My dear Mr. Von Hanstein:

I have read your novel, "BETWEEN EARTH AND MOON," with great interest, and I must must admit that it has kept me highly interested from beginning to end. I admire the thoroughness with which you handled the various situations that required a tremendous amount of thought, as well as the manner in which you handled the scientific parts of the story with your most remarkable imagination.

Your book, certainly, should be the direct cause to interest everyone in space flying and to cause widespread discussion of the problems connected with space flying.

I trust and wish you from the depth of my heart that this world rocket flight will give occasion to create for you fame as enduring as Jules Verne's.

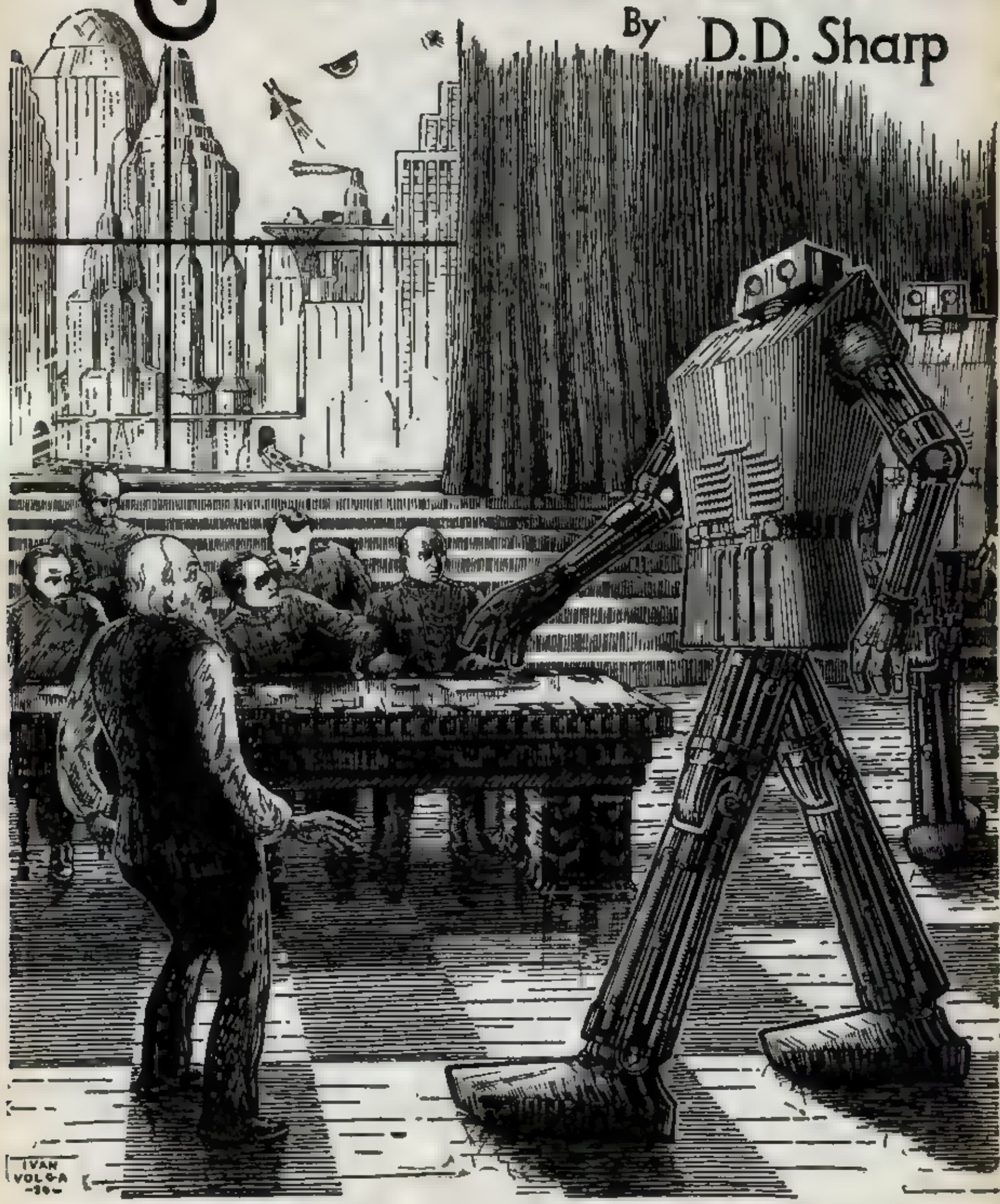
Most Sincerely Yours,
O. BASCHIN.

Between EARTH AND MOON will appear complete in our Fall, 1930, number

On All Newsstands, September 15

The Eternal Man Revives

By D.D. Sharp



(*Illustration by Volga*)

With six-foot strides the giants came bearing down on old Zulerich. They were hideous things, without brains, without feeling, without souls.

(A Sequel to The Eternal Man)

YOU will remember old Zulerich who sat paralyzed in his glass case because he had drunk his pale green drops which he had discovered after a lifetime of search for some chemical which could give eternal life.

You will remember also that after drinking them he was entirely unable to move because he lacked the power to drink a few drops of alkali which he had held in one hand.

You will remember no one suspected him of being alive, but thought he had discovered a marvelous embalming fluid which had preserved in him a semblance of life. So he was put in a glass case and displayed in the museum while scientists studied him.

Years and years passed over him, sitting in his glass case entirely unable to move, even to raise an eyebrow nor lift a finger. But he grew no older. However, with the years there came a change in the manners and moods of the human beings who passed him every day as they wandered curiously about the museum.

Sentiment warmed and grew so that it had a great influence over the minds and actions of the people. They became more and more easily swayed by soft gush of unthinking folks. They became wrought up over old Zulerich and demanded that he be buried. Some of them sobbed a bit over what they called the desecration of an old man's dead body.

The scientists who controlled the museum protested at the maudlin sentiment. They almost guessed that Zulerich was still alive and needed but some secret potion to revive him, though they had no idea what that potion might be.

D. D. SHARP

TO those who read and enjoyed "The Eternal Man" which appeared in the August, 1929, issue of Science Wonder Stories, we offer a further treat in the present sequel. Mr. Sharp offers so much that is interesting, exciting and yet food for thought that it is difficult to know how to speak of his story. There is no doubt that he points out a new road in science fiction—for his stories are witty, yet sad; deep and yet simple, and possessed of a poetry of feeling that cannot help but carry the reader away.

There is no doubt but that most people long for eternal life and fear death more than anything else. Yet as our author so convincingly points out, eternal life might not be altogether a blessing; and, before we can ask for it, we must prove that we are worthy of it. If men, such as the Rulers that Mr. Sharp pictures, were given eternal life certainly they themselves would weary of it, and the people they rule would feel it an intolerable curse. We would like our readers' opinions on this question.

Zulerich heard the whispers and speeches and discovered that a movement was under way to have him buried. Naturally in his condition he became terrified, for he could not speak. He could not move. He could make no protesting outcry at all. He could only stare straight before him and feel very much afraid.

As months passed, the movement gained support. Zulerich thought day and night, trying to think of some way to beg the leaders of the new movement to let him alone. But he could think of no way at all.

He stared at the cleaners as they washed down his case with great dousing swabs of alkali water from their sloshing pails. A few drops of that liquid would release him. Yet there was no more way to hint that he wanted a drink of the suds.

Terrifying hours he spent. He listened fearfully to every footstep which came down the narrow aisle. He watched every solemn face. He feared every approach. Every man in black seemed to him to be the undertaker who would remove him from the brightly lighted museum and take him to the darkness of an eternal grave.

Finally the hour came. Two men entered the room briskly. Zulerich did not guess their mission until they opened his case and took him out. The keeper of the museum watched wistfully and turned his back upon them as they took him down. He felt their warm hands upon him and they chilled him with terror.

After he had been put in the ambulance and driven away to the morgue, he was placed in a cheap steel casket and rumbled out to the cemetery. Fright grew in his kindly old soul as he felt them remove his box and sink it into the earth. Then he heard the sullen fall of spaded earth.

Every nerve was taut and strained trying to command his voice to cry out, yet not a whisper left his lips. He tried to rise, to pound a hand against the lid, but he could not make the slightest move. The thudding became fainter and fainter, until black silence crept in to keep him company. Silence rang in his ears. Darkness spread like a great void all about.

What the Rain Did

SO he lay, day on day, night on night, and both were the same in that black grave. And he grew used to the darkness and the silence and his thoughts quieted and ripened as old wine in a dark place. He became very wise in meditating upon things that he had observed while upon the earth.

His thoughts were of bright sunshine upon bright flowers, and of the warm moist earth at springtime when buried seeds burst their prison to send up their shoots. Seeds that were so like him, seemingly dead, but with eternal life prisoned in them.

He recalled poems and scanned them line by line, to dwell upon their beauty and mull upon their thought. He reasoned out theories. He pondered upon facts. He dreamed dreams. Then, when he could think of nothing new at all, he would begin all over and retrace his thought again. Over and over his fancy circled the unending memory of old days and wove into them new imaginings.

Still black, silent night held reign.

Eternity is a long time and much can happen in it.

Even the steel box in which old Zulerich lay rusted and grew weak and thin. There came the rains of the great wet years. Water trickled into the sod and found the mouldy cavity where rusted the steel box. A tiny leak came through a rusted hole in the casket lid and water dripped upon his forehead all night. All night or all day, he could not tell which, for day was as night in that grave.

On and on the drip continued. Tap, tap, tap, tap, like the tick of a clock almost run down. It broke in a new place and dripped upon his chest, his limbs, and finally into his upturned mouth. His nerves were tortured with the constant drip of it. He tried to move, just a little. He wanted to let the splatter of it fall in a new place. He tried to move though he knew from experience that he could not.

But he did move! After more than a hundred years of stiff hypnosis he moved! He stretched his legs. He closed his muddy, wide open eyes and then he fought furiously to get out.

The drip through the gypsum clay had carried in it the small amount of alkali he needed to get back the use of his muscles!

Squirming about against the steel lid, it ripped loose and a strip of it broke off in his hand. With that as a spade it did not take long for him to work his way out and poke his grizzled, half bald head into the gray light of a rainy day. He crawled naked into the fresh sweet rain, for his clothes were as ash and had fallen from him as he worked his way out.

Out on the top of the earth again! He had not dared dream of it as he lay paralyzed with earth spaded upon him. Such a miracle had not occurred to him at all!

He smelled the moist clean freshness of a rainwashed earth. The fragrance of new blossoming flowers, the sweet meadows which spread green and luscious all about him.

The pain and misery of his long dark wait below was behind him. It was forgotten in his joy at being above the earth again, able to move again! He was in a new century, and the scientist in him was alert as he hurried down from the top of the little hill where he had been buried. He wondered what he should find in the old town. Had mankind advanced? Had they continued with the unparalleled progress he had witnessed during the twentieth century, or had that been merely a mushroom growth already decayed? He hurried down to see.

If population was any answer man had certainly progressed, for the old home town had swelled out beyond the old forested hills, and it seemed to have been remade. It glowed with a white beauty undulled even by the dreary day. Light glowed from every wall and tower, soft and radiant like the glow of a firefly. The whole city seemed painted with some luminous enamel which glowed more brightly with the passing of dark clouds and dimmed with the rifting of them.

There were no streets, as he knew them in the old days. Instead there were crescents, and stars, and circles landscaped off for the setting of stately buildings. Many people were about, but they were high in the air, travelling here and there very rapidly, in small planes which were of a peculiar butterfly pattern. They were tinted and exquisitely lighted.

Zulerich dared not enter the city for he was naked. Still, those above seemed not to notice him at all, as he crouched behind a statue of white marble.

Finally a plane dropped vertically from the sky. He drew away, expecting to see it dashed upon the base of the statue near which he crouched, but as it dived toward the earth, the beautiful butterfly wings began to revolve around and around and it came down as lightly as a bird upon a twig.

A man crawled from the plane and stared at Zulerich in astonishment.

"What are you doing out here naked, old man?" he asked.

ZULERICH was staring a bit himself, studying every feature of man and plane. So this was a product of the twenty-third or twenty-fourth century. Zulerich's interest was alive as to what change had taken place in man and mechanics since his time on earth.

The man seemed rather more feminine than men were used to be, soft delicate features, slim, perfectly cared for hands, low well controlled voice. The plane was seemingly made to please the eye as well as to be of service.

"Where did you come from?" the man asked seemingly piqued by Zulerich's close observation.

"I dug myself from my grave," Zulerich answered knowing the surprise he must awake. "My box rusted from me and I dug through the wet clay."

The man frowned. Zulerich shook a little in the drizzle of chill rain.

The man's tone changed when he spoke again. It became indulgent.

"Sure, sure," he said consolingly, "But who are your folks, old man?"

"There must be none alive," Zulerich answered with nostalgia in his tone. "There will be no one, I am sure, none who know me, for I have been buried for so long a time. I had no way to number the years, but I must have lain there in the grave for centuries. Still, you may have a written remembrance of me, for I was a great marvel in my day. I found the compound which would perpetuate body cells, the pale green drops of eternal life!"

"Sure, sure," the man said indulgently, "but where is your home? With whom do you stay? I will take you there. Can't you remember where you live?"

"I am not insane, sir," Zulerich said looking the man straight in the eye. "The story I tell is strange, but I can prove the most marvelous part of what I saw. I still remember my formula, and I can give any man who drinks of it eternal life."

"You don't expect me to believe that?"

"Yes."

"Old man, you're crazy as a bolo. You'd better let me take you home or else go there yourself. Get on some clothes. You must know it's been a hundred years since people were allowed naked in the streets! The new rule won't stand for naked men, you ought to know that!"

"I know nothing of your rule, son. I have just come out of the grave. I have not seen the good light of God's day since the year of Our Lord twenty hundred and thirty-nine."

"You act well," the man admitted. "You have taken on the old form of speech, you dare walk naked in the street, and you hint that you reckon time by the old Julian calendar which had been in disuse for more than a hundred years. You act too well to be entirely insane." The man stared straight into old Zulerich's clear eyes. His face lighted as he seemed to arrive at a conclusion. "Prove that you can give one eternal life! By all the truth

of science, it will open a place for us both in the chamber of the Rulers."

"Give me some clothes," Zulerich demanded, "take me where we can talk, and allow me yet a little time so that I may see that man is ready for them, and I will give to every one that wishes the pale green drops which will cause him to never die!"

The man turned and opened the tinseled door of the little plane.

"Come," he decided, "I'll give you clothes. I'd do that much for anyone. Not that I believe a thing you say, not a bit of it."

"I will prove what I say," Zulerich affirmed. "I will give my secret freely to you and all the people. I have always loved them, felt a deep pity for them all, sorrowed at the waste death laid upon their lives, regretted that when man was just learning how to live it was ordained as time that he should die. The earth is already filled with a new race, they seem to have the secret of perfect health and luxurious life. I will add the last and greatest gift! They shall have time to work into their years the pattern of their dreams! They shall never know again the fear of death!"

Into the man's face crept a glowing avidity. Zulerich knew it was a hunger of eternal life, a desire to outwit eternal death!

"God!" the man whispered, "if you were only not crazy after all?"

He stared in dumb silence as though the possibilities of such a dream were too much for speech.

There came a measured, rumbling tread from somewhere below the earth. The man drew rigidly erect and stared about. He grabbed Zulerich by the arm.

"Get in," he urged, "the telecops must not sense you. They would have you before the Rulers!"

Zulerich slid his naked body into the seat and sank into soft satin cushions against the far door. There were many strange switches and lights and knobs he did not understand. Certainly the age of mechanics seemed perfect.

The man slid in beside him. The butterfly wings began to whirl around and around over the cab and sucked the plane straight into the sky. Far above the city the wings ceased whirling and the propeller ahead began to roar. The wings spread rigidly from each side of the fuselage and they sped away much as planes had when Zulerich lived before upon the earth.

It would take volumes to recount half of the mechanical marvels Zulerich saw in that one city. It seemed to him the world had become an Aladdin's lamp where the slightest touch yielded the greatest desires. There was one thing he remarked more than all the others, and that was this. Though all work that man desired was done through power broadcast by radio over the whole city, not one smoking chimney told of a power house, not one river was harnessed, and not one gasoline engine sputtered in plane or factory. Zulerich asked his companion about this, and he told him that man had long ago learned to use energy from the great source itself. The sun furnished all power through a series of intensifiers which caught the sunlight and brought it into one startling blaze of incandescent heat. This beam was shot downward like a searchlight to the engines which ran all day and stored power for the night. On occasions power could be transmitted by radio from stations with a surplus to those that needed it. Power could even be drawn from the other side of the earth should it be required.

CHAPTER II

A New World

THE man's name proved to be Rhuh, which in accordance with the new system of naming men, gave his vocation, his race, his town, and his standing in the community.

Rhuh took Zulerich to his home and gave him clothes. He was invited to dinner, and being very hungry and without an idea where else to obtain food, Zulerich accepted.

The meal was almost wholly of synthetic foods, manufactured, so Rhuh stated, from sunlight, gases, and minerals, without recourse to the slow growth of plant life. There were also fresh figs from Smyrna, grapes from California, and a new tartly flavored fruit from southern Texas. Zulerich had seen no railways nor freight planes and expressed a wonder how these fruits had come so fresh from so long a distance. Rhuh explained all food and other freight was sent into the cities through great tubes where compressed air shot the containers along at the rate of hundreds of miles an hour.

"The cities are much overcrowded," Rhuh complained. "Men pile upon each other like bees in a swarm. There has been no war for two hundred years and no pestilence in more than half a century. There are no longer guns or spears or lethal weapons of any kind. There are not even sporting arms for there has been no wild game for generations. The few animals left alive are in zoos or laboratories. Meat as diet is looked upon as barbaric."

Rhuh made a pellet of a wax-like substance and rolled it toyingly between his finger and thumb, then dropped it into a little bronze vessel where glowed a jet of purple flame. Immediately there came an aroma which filled the whole room. The smell was rather heady but pleasant.

"Carteesh," Rhuh explained. "It has become a national habit, much as cigar and cigarette smoking in other days."

"Rather nice smelling stuff," Zulerich commented.

They sat breathing the peculiar incense relaxed, day dreaming. Finally Zulerich asked:

"Is the whole earth so over populated as this city seems to be?"

Rhuh drew himself from his fancies, snapped a switch and pointed toward what before had been a tall white wall. Now it seemed a large window looking out upon an untamed jungle. He touched another switch, the jungle seemed to flow back like fields beyond the window of a railway coach. Zulerich leaped to his feet, it seemed the whole house was in motion, flowing over a tropical jungle. He sat down again slightly embarrassed, smiled and watched.

"Television, I suppose," he commented.

Rhuh nodded and said: "The foibles of human nature have always puzzled me, but here is one which exceeds all the rest for lack of explanation. Men are packed in our cities until the subways are cleared by oxygenized air, and yet the most fertile and picturesque sections of our globe are totally uninhabited. This would not seem queer, were transportation a matter of discomfort. There is absolutely no reason why we should pack up in certain spots, as though there was no standing room anywhere else. Yet we do, and were it not for our excellent medical service and our very efficient *telecops*, we would be exterminated by our own gregariousness."

"But surely," Zulerich exclaimed, pointing to the intense tropical growth, "there are animals in those forests."

Rhuh twisted the little brass knob under his fingers. The forest seemed to rush closer until the long, palmlike foliage spread thick and jumbled before them. The tropics were there, for all Zulerich could tell, dense, luxuriant and still. He peered into the undergrowth and scrutinized the foliage and tree trunks, as they passed very slowly now. He could not find a bug, nor a bird, an animal nor a snake.

"Why?" he asked.

"It was not always that men were lazy as they are now. There was a time, nearly a century ago, when everyone, male and female, vied with others in activity of brain and body. At that time scientists had learned that disease was due almost entirely to parasitic life, and parasitic life was fostered mainly by the lower animals. That was the age of gas. The age of electricity had just passed and men having exhausted its resources were turning to gas for study and accomplishment. New gases were found almost daily and new uses for gases. Gas carried men about, composed more than half their foods, heated them, cooled their cities and their foods, healed them, and entertained them.

"Acting upon the common impulse to rid life of disease, a great student of gas discovered *tertopelium*. It was brought from far above the earth by suction to the cylinders and forced into tanks by compression. It is still the lightest known gas, being found high above the earth's atmosphere. This student found that *tertopelium* would destroy all lower animal and microscopic life, but would not harm man at all. I believe even as far back as the twentieth century of the old Julian calendar, chemists had discovered powders that were poisonous to insects but entirely harmless to man.

"Not to bore you with details, *tertopelium* was condensed and mixed with a heavier gas to give it weight. Then the entire surface of the earth was flooded with it from planes. Since that time there has been no parasitic nor animal life in our forests. *Tertopelium* made a very efficient job. Whether nature will evolve the like again can not be proved nor even guessed for a good many thousands of years."

The Telecops!

WHILE the topic of conversation was life and death, Zulerich asked Rhuh what ideas prevailed as to the ultimate future. It seemed that man had abandoned hope of eternal life upon this planet or any other, though the very fact that progress had always been toward perfection should have strengthened rather than weakened faith in future life. And because of this doubt as to life beyond the grave, Rhuh was all the more eager to prove the hope Zulerich now dangled before him.

But as Zulerich questioned and studied, he was not so enthusiastic about his promise to give life to the people. He was a man of deep faith. He knew that faith had fostered and mothered every accomplishment, and he doubted the wisdom of giving men eternal life when they had no faith and no vision. So he talked on, letting his mind run along one channel and his words another.

He told how he had discovered the secret of the mangled rat which had so upset him with the pain in its eyes, and of the scientists who had studied him, and of the sentiment which had buried him. And Rhuh in turn told of many new and incredible marvels which Zulerich had never thought to be possible. Rhuh finally seemed convinced that after all he was talking with a very old and very remarkable man, and admitted that he really believed that Zulerich might have discovered the elixir of life, for in those days there were so many new and wonderful things, men had long since ceased to hoot at anything.

Zulerich commended the spirit of progress so evident all about, but Rhuh did not seem to possess any of his enthusiasm.

"Yes," he admitted, "we have made incredible progress over the old age of invention of two hundred and more years ago. There is no need now that anyone should be in want or be denied the luxuries of life."

But, in the days that followed, Zulerich found that the masses were in want. The Rulers had become insane with power, and ridden with a lust for accumulation of wealth. They took with a bold and greedy hand, for they no longer feared any uprising of the people, nor any embezzlement by employees. The *telecops* which guarded their treasure and maintained their power were strictly mechanical and operated by a secret code that was known only to the owners. Political and social relations had in no wise kept pace with the progress of mechanical invention. All advancement had been material. Politicians openly abused their government. Humility, charity, idealism, self-sacrifice, these were traits unknown. Love had a new definition, and the new life, beneath its mechanical perfection, was a hollow thing.

So Zulerich told Rhuh finally that he would not give the secret of life to the people, nor to any one, until some semblance of justice was done, man to man.

Rhuh stared at him for a moment with the corners of his mouth drawn awry. Then he grasped his arm and snarled:

"Old man, you make good. If you've been lying to me, dangling a hope before me that is a hoax, if — —" his lips twitched and jerked, but no sound passed them for a while. He was too angry and disappointed to complete his threat. Instead he jabbed at a button beside the table.

There came a hum above the house. A big plane dropped past the window. Zulerich looked out as it landed light as a bird upon a twig. Its door opened. Three grotesque imitations of men got out. They were giant fellows. They must have been ten feet tall, with angular arms as thick as a man's thigh, and legs as large in proportion as the arms. They walked forward with a stiff mechanical lock step. They reached the door, wheeled in perfect unison, and came tramping in, bowing their heads to clear the doors. The whole inside of the house reverberated with the pulse of their measured tread. They filed in and Zulerich shrank involuntarily from them as they marched to where he sat.

Their heads were not round but box-like, and to make them more horrible they were fitted with great glass eyes which stared at one with wide greenish pupils as through they were dead. Of course they could not see, for they were not live things, just mechanical police, but Zulerich learned later that they sensed a man or an object by the shadow thrown upon their eyes. This operated an electrical device which guided them. In the back of each steel body was a hinged door, which looked to be a way of entering the mechanical chamber to mend any defects.

One of the telecops stood back at the door. The other two advanced and Zulerich sat as stiffly as he had done in his glass case, wondering what they were about to do to him.

Long, stiff arms reached out with three jerky moves and seized him with hard, iron fingers.

"We arrest you in the name of the Rulers. Come!"

Before the Rulers

ZULERICH had thought the silent oncoming *telecops* were terrible enough, but that mechanical voice had an impersonal tone which gave him a feeling of the utter futility of protesting or begging for consideration. He abandoned hope and made no resistance. He knew any protest or defence would be useless. He rose and followed the man who had seized his arms, running to keep up, but in spite of all he could do, he could not keep pace with the long legs of the mechanical giant and was dragged towards the plane.

He passed Rhuh at the door. There was no pity nor leniency in the glare Rhuh gave him.

He was taken out and placed in the rear cab of the large plane. It was indeed a large plane in comparison with the small ones which flew all about. Under its wings and upon its fuselage was the triangle insignia of the police.

They rose into the air. Through the glass of the cab he could see a real man at the wheel. The three telecops rode in the rear cab with him.

A thousand feet above the city their course was set toward the east. They traveled all day and a short while before dark they came to a very large city which was the capital of the world. There he was placed in prison. The prison showed none of the advancement of the day, for the Rulers had little or no consideration for those who fell into their hands. The next day he was brought to trial.

Rhuh appeared against him, testifying that Zulerich had told him of a secret elixir of eternal life, and had promised it to him for a suit of clothes and that Zulerich had taken the clothes but had not disclosed the secret.

The Judge of the court was indignant that such a case should be brought before him. He dismissed Zulerich and lectured Rhuh for believing in such foolishness. But later in the night the Judge sought out Zulerich and talked with him and tried to bargain for a portion of the pale green drops.

Zulerich was amazed at the cringing attitude of the Judge and said:

"You ridicule me in your Court, yet you seek me in the night. Judges of even my day would not be so bold as this."

So he refused to bargain with him and was called before a council of the high Rulers. They made much over him at first, inviting him to the palace, as though he were a guest. They engaged him with sly questions and finally prepared a feast for him. Every one of the Council of Ten was there.

He was a little awed as he ate and drank with them, for Zulerich had always been an humble man, investigating for the sake of truth and not coveting honor.

When the feast was over every man sat a while in silence and watched him closely. Zulerich felt somewhat uncomfortable under their scrutiny and sat in silence, wondering just what their gravity could mean.

One of them finally asked: "Has there been time?"

A short, dark man with a Vandyke who had watched Zulerich even more closely and more carefully than the rest of them, nodded soberly. Then he turned to those about the table and said:

"There *is* something strange about this man Zulerich. He drank the poison. Each of you saw me pour it into his glass. Yet he seems entirely unharmed!"

"Do you think he is as he claims?" the Chairman asked.

"I do not know," the Vandyke answered, shaking his knotty head. "By all law of nature this man should be dead, yet we must admit he lives!"

Zulerich grew bolder then. They had tested the truth of his claim and had about become convinced. "I have the secret of eternal life," he vowed, "and I am one who loves his fellow man. When you shall do justice and be content one man to rule himself rather than another, I will give it freely to you, and to all the people."

They laughed at his speech, calling him sentimental and impractical. And when their ridicule had no effect they began to bargain with him for the secret, but Zulerich in turn laughed at them, deriding them for offering so little for so great a thing as the secret of immortality.

Finding they had made no headway they reduced their demands to one portion for each of the rulers, but Zulerich shook his grizzled old head and muttered:

"You are not fit for eternal life."

"We are nearly perfect," the Chairman insisted. "We lack but this one thing. We have subdued the earth. We have mastered all natural law, except this law of life and death. Men and nature serve us. We will give you a place in our authority, allow you to share equally in our power, though we have bought this good thing with daring and danger, and you have risked nothing at all. Give us so that we may live always and we will give you power over the earth."

Still Zulerich shook his head and speaking to the Chairman of the Council he said sternly, "Your lack is greater than you know."

The trace of a fine sneer touched the Chairman's lips and he asked, "What is it, old man, that we lack, except this secret of life and death?"

"Imagination," Zulerich said slowly, dwelling upon each syllable. "You can not think beyond your own selves!"

CHAPTER III

Zulerich Relents

THE Chairman pointed a long white finger at him and said acridly: "I have no patience with your chatter. We offer no more bargains. We will have the secret out of you, old man!"

At the right of the Chairman sat a big, bullnecked blonde man of about forty. He shouted so that his bellowing voice filled the hall. "That is what I wanted to do at first!

"Have the old dodderer's secret from him or give him the garrotte!"

"Checkmate, gentlemen!" the Vandyke objected. "If this old man really has the secret of eternal life, he can not die. We are frustrated by the very thing we most desire!"

A bushy, black-eyed man beside Zulerich reached over and grasped the scientist's ear. He gave it a violent twist.

Zulerich winced involuntarily with pain.

The bushy man chuckled and spoke in a deep bass, "Gentlemen, I have shown you a way. Torture him! He can still feel pain."

The whole council smiled with relief. The bullneck blonde shouted boisterously, "Have it out of him!"

The Chairman said very quietly, "Come old man, give us the secret, or you'll have a mangled body to drag about."

Zulerich shuddered. For the moment he wished he had never clawed himself from his peaceful grave. He was a conscientious man and would rather have endured

that everlasting night than to give these brutal men everlasting life in which to exploit the earth. He remembered the mangled rat, the fiery pain in its eyes. He knew, wherever it was then, it still endured the pain of the blow it had received that day at the museum more than two hundred years before. If they mangled him he would carry it into the eternal years ahead. He did not feel that he could submit to it, and yet, he knew also that death was the only enemy these tyrants feared. Death alone could conquer them and raise up new rulers with kinder hearts. Should he reveal to them his secret, he would betray all men forever into their power. Still, he felt he could not submit to eternal pain. It was too great a price to pay for other people's comfort.

The Chairman called out something in a peculiar tongue.

There came a measured tramping from outside the hall. The whole palace seemed to throb with the sound of it. The telecops were coming! He would be given over to them that they might mangle him!

The great oaken doors at the end of the hall swung back. Zulerich hitched upward from his chair as the square-headed giants, with their set, hideous eyes, came marching through with a measured precision which shook the tiled floor. No one paid him any attention. They were smiling with certitude as to what should transpire.

With six-foot strides the giants came bearing down upon old Zulerich, who stood erect and determined to meet his fate bravely. They were hideous things, men without brains, without feeling, without souls! They were more dreadful than a firing squad or an army with set bayonets.

Iron hands reached to grasp him. Iron fingers clutched his arms. Iron arms raised him from the floor. The giants whirled, and struck off toward the still open doors.

"Wait!" Zulerich begged, turning his big eyes upon the Chairman of the Council. "Give me a minute. I relent. I will give you each a portion of the secret drug!"

The Chairman gave a sharp command in a peculiar tongue. The iron fingers held him but the *telecops* halted and stood at attention.

"I will give you each a portion that will give to you eternal life," Zulerich repeated. "Stop this horrible procedure."

"Very well," the Chairman answered. "But do not play with us or attempt any sly schemes."

Another command was given and Zulerich was let to the floor, but still surrounded by the mechanical giants.

"Have five bottles brought to me, together with the quantity of each chemical that I shall write down. I will then mix them in my secret proportions and from the brew I will give each of you a vial of this solution and a vial for each of the governors of the provinces of the world. This you must take at the first peep of the sun on the first day of the week following the new year. Then you shall have eternal life!"

The Rulers were in great spirits. But one more caution suggested that they put upon his pulse a new machine which could detect by the quiver of red ink lines upon its tape whether a man lied or spoke the truth.

So they brought the lie detector and put its band upon his arm and its finger upon his pulse, and then they asked him again:

"Will the secret portion which you shall give us render unto us eternal life, if we take it in the manner you have said?"

"Yes, it will certainly give you eternal life," Zulerich answered. And as they looked at the register upon the tape they agreed that he had spoken the truth.

Chaos!

SO THEY brought him the chemicals and the bottles were put in the laboratory they furnished him. And when he had mixed the solution and bottled it, he gave it to the Rulers, who sent vials to each Ruler of the provinces throughout the world, retaining a large portion for themselves and their friends and families.

So it happened that on the peep of the sun on the first day of the week following the new year, all the Rulers and their friends and families throughout the whole world drank of the pale green drops and sat, or stood, or lay, in whatever position they were when they drank their drops. For, like Zulerich when he first drank the pale green drops, they lived, *but they were entirely unable to move!*

But then Zulerich entirely lost his head in his joy over his success. Now that the tyrants were helpless and deposed he should have been wise enough to gradually release control to the masses. Instead he published broadcast the news and proclaimed that all men should take the rewards of their own labor and live peacefully with one another. He invited them to drink of his pale green drops of eternal life and promised them additional drops which would give freedom of movement.

The people were quick to claim control of affairs, but they were afraid of him and his drops which had stricken their rulers in such a perplexing way. Even Rhuh, who had followed Zulerich to the palace, eyed him with a new awe, and would not drink of the drops he had tried so hard to obtain.

Things rocked along in this way a few months. Zulerich, having no other home, stayed in the palace, and Rhuh, curious as to what the scientist was about, stayed to watch him.

Some of the stronger labor societies and more intelligent men and women met in the courts and organized a new republic somewhat on the order of the old United States of America. People everywhere hailed the United States of the World as a Utopia which was to fill every need and wish. But they leaned upon it too heavily, and it gave way. Even in an age of perfected mechanics they learned that one's government depends a good deal upon what he put into it himself.

Riots started in the assembly rooms and spread from city to city. Men fought in the plazas and the disturbance was quickly scattered over the whole earth. There was soon no safety nor peace in any city of the whole world.

Anarchy followed. Industries became idle through lack of labor and fear of pillage. The fighting was savage; tooth and fist, cudgel and stone, with fire to anything that would take flame.

Soft, cultured men suddenly slipped their veneer and became wolves of rage and fear. Weakened by a life of mechanical efficiency, they had not fighting strength, yet they were as fiercely bloodthirsty as any of their savage forebears.

Zulerich heard, with growing sadness, the tales Rhuh brought to the palace. Works of art, chemical formulae that had been perfected by a lifetime of patient experiment, machinery which had been constructed with years of tireless labor, were being mutilated and destroyed.

Men had gone mad with too much freedom. They had no control over themselves. They had been too long dependent upon stronger wills than their own. And Zulerich became wiser through his second great mistake. He knew that he had overthrown one evil and spread a greater one. He found out most certainly that any government, no matter how despotic or rotten it might be, was far better than no government at all!

He faced a new problem. He mulled over it as the progress of a thousand years was being pushed backward into oblivion.

Should he revive the tyrants? Should he return the selfish despots to power? Should he allow them again to take control and grind the people forever, now that they would have eternal life?

Before he reached the solution to these questions, Rhuh betrayed his hiding place to the people. Zulerich did not learn of this until it was too late for him to run, if he had wanted to do so. The first idea he had that the mob wanted to kill him was the drone of their planes above the palace. He could not believe they would hate him because he had taken away their Rulers from them.

He peered from the palace door as he heard the noise of planes and raised voices. The sky was swarming with the small, highly colored planes. Every landing place in the park was crowded with them. One lighted on top of another. Men leaped from them to pack the court. They pushed forward toward the palace, storming it with sheer force of numbers. They were in a frenzy and seemed to acknowledge no leader.

Rebellion!

ZULERICH stood alone. There were no soldiers, no police. The *telecops* which guarded the palace were useless to him. But he was courageous with self-forgetting superiority which ignored the menace all about him. His one thought was of right, and reconstruction, of stopping the senseless destruction.

He pushed open the big glazed doors which opened from the vestibule upon the outside steps, hoping with words of reason and a calm bearing to shame the crowd and give them a new vision.

But these restless men below him were not to be shamed by self-sacrifice and heroism. They were used only to obedience to iron wills. They respected nothing but the law of stronger forces. They had no code, no standard, except the desire to get while the getting was good.

They charged up the broad, sweeping steps which spread a marble cascade below the doors. He felt the passion of their clawing hands, the hoarse bellow of their hate and lust, saw their dancing, bloodshot eyes as they hissed and snarled.

The fury of it swelled until the very walls of the palace seemed shaken. The contagion passed from court to court. It seethed and boiled over to spread out through the city.

The sound and sight of such Babel almost drained old Zulerich's resolves. But he stood his ground for a moment, daring them to be as brave and sane as he. Stopped them in a semicircle of hesitating wrath, like beasts crouching before a whip. He might have reasoned with them then, might have brought them to themselves and a knowledge of their senseless mania, but a sound grew behind the palace walls as silence spread before the palace steps.

New howls now had the swelling throb of unrestrained passion; the chilling thrill of unreasoning lust, the terrifying swing of irresistible force.

Zulerich had heard that cry of rebellion before. It had chilled him then, to think of what the sleeping giant of revolt could do if he awoke. And it was awake now!

The swelling rhythm surged and grew, pulse on pulse, throb on throb, wave on wave. He turned and ran. Who could reason with this insanity? Terror had hold of the earth!

He plunged headlong down the palace hall, stopping only to shut and lock the big oak doors. He reached the marble stairs and took them with his long, agile leaps. He passed rank on rank of rigid *telecops* as they stood at stiff mechanical attention against the wall. He passed rigid, paralyzed Rulers where they stood, or sat, or lay, their motionless eyes staring straight before them. Those eyes sickened him as they burned on him with life. He knew what fear clutched those one-time fearless despots as they lay helpless and cringed before the trampling mob which howled down upon them.

But he had no time for pity. Palace doors were being splintered, furnishings wrecked and borne down as men clawed and crushed each other and beat across the tile with the drum of angry feet, while over all the palace swelled the rhythm of tramping feet!

"Fools! Fools!" Zulerich sobbed as he leaped ahead. "Fools!" he shouted, as he reached the next floor. "You are pulling down your own protection. Why must you always destroy that which you do not understand!"

But his words were as useless as the line of tall *telecops* which stood with infinite patience against the palace walls. The masses were as ignorant of controlling themselves as he was of controlling the *telecops*. There stood the iron soldiers who knew only how to obey. They were the perfect soldier without initiative or fear, waiting only the proper word, but he did not know how to command.

CHAPTER IV

Flame and Fire!

THE masses piled into the halls like medieval peasants storming a castle. There were no firearms. Men wielded sticks, chairs, missiles, any weapon they could find.

Zulerich ran swiftly and with endurance. The pale green drops had restored the agility of his early youth. But there was no escape. Men already were upon the stairs and swarming from the elevators overhead. He was surrounded. There was no way past them at all. Hoarse bellows which cried for his destruction rose above the incessant howl. He made a turn about the second floor and took the next flight of stairs.

At the third floor men were also swarming. He turned down the hall toward the end of the building. Expansive windows made up most of the outer walls. Through these Zulerich saw a flash of the dreaded heat ray. It whipped here and there over the city like the blade of a great searchlight. The brightness of it was such that it cut daylight as an electric torch does night. It raked the city, found the palace and shot a broad blade of incandescence through the windows and down the hall. Fire burst from it and furnishings flamed as paper thrown into an electric furnace. It had no billowy, roaring flame which trailed lurid clouds of smoke. It was a quiet, intense heat which blinded him and burned down the struggling men with the suddenness of an explosion. A frightful sight, that blazing tongue consuming and

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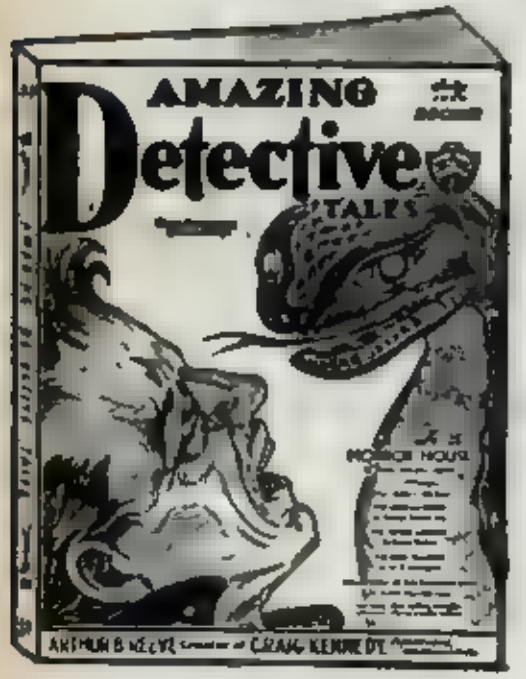

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The Reader Speaks

(*Continued from page 571*)

We Would Have More Progress

Editor, Wonder Stories Quarterly

I have just been re-reading Lilith Lorraine's "Into The 28th Century" in the Winter QUARTERLY and I am more than enthusiastic about it.

Perhaps Miss (or Mrs.) Lorraine is more of a philosopher than a scientist but that is by no means a criticism. If we had more Philosopher-scientists and less of the other kind that haven't imagination enough to realize that there may be a lot of things going on around us that never affect any one of our five senses and never produce any visible effect on the phenomenon which we call matter, perhaps we would have a more genuine progress.

Miss Lorraine's story gives us some interesting thoughts on the most important of all sciences, the science of every day human relations. She seems to be one of the all-too-few people who realize that real lasting happiness can come only when we have become masters of ourselves and that it never can come through greater indulgence in passion as Judge Lindsey and some others would have us believe.

Our advances in the material sciences are all very interesting but they can never lead to anything but the destruction of what little real civilization we have unless we put into practice more of the principles of true brotherly love.

What a wonderful world this soon would be if we all had Lilith Lorraine's clean, lofty ideals about life; if no man, woman, or child had any reason to fear any other human being on earth; if any child could look with absolute confidence to any older person as a safe and reliable guide and counselor; and, yes, if any woman could go anywhere alone with any man for any length of time without it ever occurring to anyone that their relations while together would be any other than that of an affectionate brother and sister unless they had formally entered into an agreement to assume the responsibilities of parenthood. Of course not quite all of this is touched on in Miss Lorraine's story but that is about what one would expect from the kind of people which she pictures.

One of the principal features of every story about the future should be the author's ideas of what humanity of the future *ought* to be like. What we need is higher ideals to aim at, not pessimistic prophecies of civilization going to the "bow wows."

Many space travel stories are very interesting but I often wonder why some authors will chase their imaginations all over the Universe in search of a humanity meaner and uglier than any of us. Isn't it more profitable to dream about *beauty* of character and form then the reverse?

Well, this is my first contribution to your waste basket and you may be glad to know that I get spells like this only at rare intervals.

Roy E. Kimball,
Box 73,
Wecota, S. Dak.

(There is no doubt but that Lilith Lorraine gives us something real and vital in science fiction. She makes us discontented with what is ugly, tawdry and mean—she gives us new ideals and, in her stories, a means of realizing them.

We really don't think that civilization is going to the "bowwows." But we do not think that we can complacently trust is not to go there. If it is put to a test, we must depend on ourselves to save it.

(*Continued on page 573*)

The Reader Speaks

(*Continued from page 572*)

If we are to escape the dangers that lie before us, with our ever more complicated existence, we must face the truths of our existence and then determine to remedy them. Unfortunately it may not be possible, when civilization is tottering, to escape by fourth dimensional means to a new century.

But Lilith Lorraine does gives us something by which to judge our own civilization. She teaches us that there is nothing inevitable about our world—that it is not the best of all possible worlds, and with strength and will we can build a newer and better one.—*Editor.*)

If the Foreign Authors Are As Good

Editor, Wonder Stories Quarterly:

If all your stories by foreign authors are as good as "The Stone From The Moon," I hope to see many of them in WONDER STORIES QUARTERLY. "Electropolis" sounds good. Is it? I also liked "The Ape Cycle," by Clare Winger Harris and "Via The Hewitt Ray," by M. F. Rupert. Your women writers can write good stories. I hope you publish more of their stories in future issues.

Instead of having an all gold or silver cover why not have just a border of that color and have a picture with a different colored background inside of this border. I think it would look much better.

Are you going to use the new type of print in SCIENCE WONDER QUARTERLY as you do in the monthly? I like it because it does not blur as the type you are using now sometimes does.

Jack Darrow,
4225 N. Spalding Ave.,
Chicago, Ill.

(The suggestion about the cover is gratefully accepted and will be considered. All issues of the monthly and the QUARTERLY will have the larger type, that which we used originally. We have discovered that is what our readers want and we are giving it to them.—*Editor.*)

The "Stone" Is Valuable

Editor, Wonder Stories Quarterly:

Upon examination I find the "Stone from the Moon" to be no ordinary stone but a very precious and valuable one. It is composed of about 50% good and logical science and 50% of interest of a rare sort. Otto Willi Gail is an author you certainly can't afford to lose. Paul, as usual, illustrated the story in a very convincing manner.

If possible, I would like to see either in the QUARTERLY or WONDER STORIES MONTHLY a list of the motion pictures and plays which have a scientific background such as the two German pictures "Metropolis" and "The Woman From The Moon."

And now Mr. Editor I would like your opinion as to whether you think it is possible, on some other planet for instance, for a color not known on Earth to exist. I do not mean some weird shade but an absolutely new color which can not be found on Earth.

Forrest Ackerman,
520 Staples Ave.
San Francisco, Calif.

(We will try, on Mr. Ackerman's suggestion to compile a list of motion pictures that have a scientific background. We will probably have something to report by the next issue of the QUARTERLY.

We are somewhat in doubt as to the meaning of the question regarding a "new color." We become aware of color because a substance absorbs all light rays except certain ones. The one it does not absorb it reflects to our eyes. Therefore when an object appears red to us, it means that of all the wavelengths of the light it receives are absorbed except red which is reflected to our eyes. Now to have a new color (we assume Mr. Ackerman means a new pure color) it would be necessary for our eyes to be able to "see" further into the spectrum that they do. Or there would be necessary a kind of light, which when broken up yields other combinations—or provides an entirely different kind of spectrum.

Or looking at it another way—objects do not have color, they reflect a certain wave length, absorbing all others. Our eyes *interpret* that wave length reflected to us as color. Now if our eyes were constructed differently, if we had the eyes to see radio waves or heat waves or X Rays we might see something "unusual." It might easily be that beings on another world might have the type of sensory apparatus that yields much different results than our own.—*Editor.*)

"Osmotic Theorem" Startling

Editor, Wonder Stories Quarterly:

On finishing the Winter issue of the QUARTERLY, I can say that R. H. Romans' "Moon Conquerors" is the greatest story I have read, barring none. Gail's "Shot Into Infinity" was good but a little dry.

The inserting of the history of the Dunelians made the story invaluable as it gave a new theory of the possible history of the earth.

The "Osmotic Theorem" was a little startling. It was of course only a theory and personally I don't believe in it. But everyone is entitled to his opinion.

John Reibel,
634 Main Street,
Dunkirk, New York.

(Although the "Osmotic Theorem" was in direct contradiction to the general theory held—in that it propounds the idea that the interior of the earth is *cold* and not *hot*—the theory has much to sustain it. At least the general idea that the interior of the earth is hot, is only a guess, and has absolutely no experimental evidence in back of it. Our explorations into the earth have been mere pin pricks and tell us nothing about the vast physical and chemical changes that have gone on and will go on at the earth's core. Captain Meek, like so many of our authors, has served a great purpose in his story, by showing us that what is held to be absolute truth in one generation may be entirely upset in another, and that we must always hold an open mind about the things of which we know nothing.—*Editor.*)

Will Keep the Supremacy

Editor, Wonder Stories Quarterly:

I was much impressed with Mr. Roman's second offering—his incomparable "Moon Conquerors" in the Winter QUARTERLY. I have read the publications you have edited since the days of "Station X," but I can truthfully say that the Romans' story is unequalled by any you have published. Such stories as well as "The Conquerors" by David H. Keller, "A Rescue From Jupiter," "The Human Termites" and others are exactly what your readers want. And so long as you continue to publish such stories your magazines will keep the supremacy you have established for them.

The improved appearance of your

(*Continued on page 574*)

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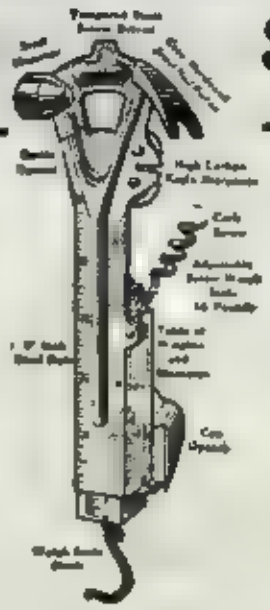

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The Reader Speaks

(*Continued from page 573*)

monthly, too, speaks well for your effort to give us the best there is in science fiction.

Louis Clark,
Comanche, Okla.

(What Mr. Clark says is quite applicable. A science fiction story fails of its purpose in our opinion, and from what we have learned, from the opinion of our readers, unless there is a point or purpose to it. Such a purpose or lesson, or moral, or what you will, is evident in the stories our correspondent mentions. It is our intention to continue to publish stories that we can give to our readers and say, "This is *not* an insult to your intelligence."—*Editor.*)

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912.

Of WONDER STORIES QUARTERLY, published 4 times a year at 404 North Wesley Avenue, Mount Morris, Ill., for April 1st, 1930.

State of New York)
County of New York)

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Irving S. Manheimer, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the WONDER STORIES QUARTERLY MAGAZINE, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher, Stellar Publishing Corp., 404 No. Wesley Avenue, Mount Morris, Ill.

Editor, Hugo Gernsback, 98 Park Place, New York City.

Managing Editor, David Lasser, 98 Park Place, New York City.

Business Manager, Irving S. Manheimer, 98 Park Place, New York City.

2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.)

Stellar Publishing Corp., 404 North Wesley Avenue, Mount Morris, Ill.; Hugo Gernsback, 98 Park Place, New York City; Sidney Gernsback, 98 Park Place, New York City; D. Manheimer, 98 Park Place, New York City

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.)

None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given, also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

IRVING S. MANHEIMER,
Business Manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 29th day of April, 1930.

(Seal) ROZELLA BENNETT,
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Here is a real high power imported microscope for instruction and laboratory work. Has regulation rotating light mirror. Has adjustable lens for correct focusing. With it come 3 specimen slides. Entirely brass. Packed in neat leatherette box. Magnifies about 30 diameters.

No. 8517 Microscope. Prepaid **$1.90**

Magnifier

This fine folding pocket magnifying glass, also called linen tester, is made entirely of gold lacquer brass. Has powerful lens that magnifies everything 10 times. Has fixed focus. Just open it and it is ready. When folded this magnifier occupies a space about as large as a quarter and twice as thick.

No. 8516 Magnifier Prepaid **35c**

Ooh-La-La Ring

Handsomely engraved platinum finish. Looks just like any other ring. But, oh boy, wait till you look through the "VIEW." Strong magnifying glass shows French actress when viewed against light. Ring has large imitation diamond. When ordering enclose a strip of paper giving size of your finger.

No. 8511 Surprise ring. Prepd **35c**

Periscope

See what's going on behind your back with this Sechachusetscope. Used like a magnifying glass. No one knows you're watching them. Gives you "eyes in your back." This article is made in molded bakelite and its size is 2"x1½".

No. 8506 Periscope. Prepaid **25c**

Microscope

A real high-powered imported pocket microscope for instruction and laboratory work. Has adjustable and automatic lens for correct focussing. Comes with one prepared subject and three specimen glass slides. Entirely made of lacquered brass. Packed in a neat leatherette box. Magnifies 40 diameters.

No. 8517 Microscope. **$1.40**

10c Compass 10c

Fine imported magnetic compass. ACCURATE Pocket size. Invaluable for hikers, automobilists. Often saves lives. Use it to tell live electric wires; make your own galvanoscope. Fully nickel plated. The actual article is about one-half again as large as illustration shows.

No. 8507. Compass Prepaid **10c**

X-Ray Tube

With this little instrument you apparently see through your hand, cloth, wood, stone and other objects. See the lead in a pencil, the stem hole in a pipe, the bones in your fingers. An amazing optical illusion that no one has ever satisfactorily explained. Startle the girls by showing them what this tube can do and let them imagine the rest.

No. 8500. X-Ray Tube. Prepaid .. **10c**

Wonderscopes

NEW! Greatest pocket microscope invented. Looks like a fountain pen and ACTUALLY MAGNIFIES 25 TIMES. Hair looks as big as a rope. See the pores in your skin. Has slide adjustable lens. For home, laboratory or shop. Full black enamel with clip. In size measures 5"x¾". Must be seen to be appreciated.

No. 8508. Wonderscope A— Prepaid **95c**

No. 8653 Wonderscope B—Same as above but adjustable to the amount of light available.

Prepaid **$1.35**

Luminous Paint

Make your own luminous articles. Paint watch and clock hands, electric light switches, push buttons, keyholes, house numbers, etc. 1,000 uses. Articles treated stand out brilliantly in dark. The darker the room, the more brilliancy.

No. 8509 Luminous Paint. Prepaid **25c**

No. 8509-A Large Size **$1.00**

Nose Blower

The real article! Conceal nose blower in your handkerchief and blow into instrument while you pretend to blow your nose. Everyone stops and looks at you. There never was a terrible noise like it. Keep it up as long as you like.

No. 8510 Nose-blower. Prepaid. **10c**

Huffgun

Bluff your friends with this gun. Made of composition metal handsomely nickeled. Exactly same size, weight and shape as real article. Fine to bluff burglars. Used also as desk paper weight. Size of this gun is 6½" long and 2" wide.

No. 8501 Huffgun. Prepaid. **65c**

Imp in the Bottle

A real Cartesian diver—Can you explain how it works? A little glass imp placed in a bottle of plain water and sealed with special rubber cap, dances up and down in the liquid at your will. Will perform unique tricks. An interesting, amazing and scientific novelty. Bottle 4 inches high.

No. 8573. Imp in Bottle. Prepaid **35c**

Microscopes

A REAL laboratory microscope that stands 6" high, comes complete with forceps, 2 prepared specimen slides and 2 blank glass slides, all packed in a showy wood box with brass hinges and fittings. Made entirely of lacquered brass, with powerful lenses. Entirely demountable to facilitate cleaning. Has Abbe (open both sides) frame and rotary reflecting mirror. Made in three models for use in home, office, or laboratory.

No. 8445. Microscope. Magnifies 40 diameters. Prepaid **$3.75**

No. 8446. Microscope. Magnifies 75 diameters. Prepaid **$5.50**

No. 8447. Microscope. Magnifies 90 diameters. Prepaid **$6.75**

Big Magic Set

A chest of magical apparatus and directions for performing TWELVE AMAZING MAGICAL FEATS. An entire evening's entertainment can be given with them. Includes the Magic Vanisher, Cigarette Vanisher, New Coins, Master Memory, Beads on String, Obedient Ball, Vanishing Watch, and many others. Biggest value ever offered, worth double the price we ask.

No. 8712. Big Magic Set. Prpd. **$1.00**

Real Pistol

Here's a real pistol, yet small enough to be used as a watch charm. Illustration is full size. Imported, best European workmanship. Exact reproduction of standard pistol. Cut shows pistol broken open to load blank cartridge. When trigger is pulled, cartridge goes off with a loud BANG, that can be heard for a block. Pistol entirely made of steel, nickel plated. Handle is beautifully engraved. Octagonal barrel. Comes in box, with cleaning rod and 25 blank cartridges AT NO EXTRA CHARGE. (As explosives are prohibited to go by mail, pistol is sent express collect).

No. 8010 Pistol **$1.20**

No. 8009A Box of 25 Cartridges, by express collect **25c**

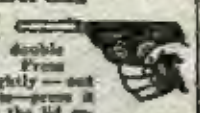
Opera Glass Charms

A pretty and unique watch charm. ¾"x1". Exact duplicate of real Opera Glasses. Powerful lenses that clearly magnify the view. Assorted views, music and French actresses. Fitted with ring to attach to watch chain. 2 "VIEWS" to each charm.

No. 7985. Bone Opera Glass Charm. Prepaid **25c**

No. 8596. Rolled Gold Opera Glass Charm. Prepaid **75c**

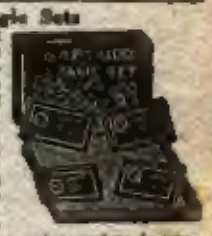
Cigaret Gun



NEW. Actually shoots cigarettes. New improved double action model. Press the trigger lightly—out shoots a cigarette—press it again, back flies the lid revealing it a cigarette case. Looks like a real automatic. Made entirely of metal, with oxidized stocks, barrel and fittings. The same size as the real article, and weighs but 12 ounces.

No. 8618. Automatic Cigarette Gun. Prepaid **$1.79**

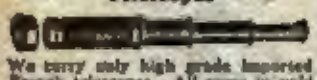
Magic Sets



Here is the best selection of three magic sets at bargain prices. The contents of any of these three sets are valued at 40c. Requires no skill to perform, are entirely automatic and simple in operation. Each box contains five or more magic articles and complete instructions for performing the various feats.

No. 8701. Coin Tricks. Prepaid
No. 8700. Magic Set. Prepaid. **25c**
No. 8707. Card Tricks. Prepaid. **65c**
Or all three sets ..... Prepaid

Telescopes



We carry only high grade imported French telescopes. All cases in gold brass lacquer. The most powerful telescope made. No. 8652 is covered with black Morocco leather. Brings object nearer ten times. This number has also brass dust cap and automatic greslide piece. Comes in imitation leather carrying case.

No. 8504. Telescope, Out draw, 15¾". Prepaid **98c**

No. 8648. Telescope, Two draw, 23¾". Prepaid **$2.00**

No. 8649. Telescope, Three draw, 12¾". Prepaid **$3.50**

No. 8650. Special Telescope, 4 sections, 13½" long. Prepaid **$4.95**

Blackstone's Magic

A big 96-page book, every trick illustrated. Instructions for over 50 MAGICAL TRICKS—25 MATCH TRICKS—7 OPTICAL ILLUSIONS and MANY OTHER interesting diversions. No skill needed—no practice—no special apparatus. Written by the famous magician, Harry Blackstone. Neatly bound with highly lithographed cover. Most astonishing value ever offered.

No. 8661. Book of Magic. Prepaid **25c**

NEW!! Telegraph 25c

For the astonishing small sum of 25c you can learn telegraphy. Any wide awake boy or girl can learn the telegraph codes with this little outfit within from 30 to 60 days. Gives loud signals perfectly—nothing to wear out. No batteries. The instrument consists of hard fiber base, mechanical sounder and telegraph key knob. Screw to table or carry it in pocket. Guaranteed to give exact reproduction of telegraph sounds just like regulation sets. We also furnish free a set of telegraph codes as shown, and full instructions of how to learn telegraphy.

No. 8525. Telegraph Set. Prepaid **25c**

Hummatone

Anyone can play the Hummatone. A unique and novel musical instrument played with nose and mouth combined. Produces sweet toned music similar to a flute. No fingering—no lessons. A little practice and you'll get the knack. Made entirely of metal. Nothing to get out of order or wear out.

No. 8537. Hummatone. Prepaid. **10c**

Skeleton

Joke Starter. A big jointed figure of a skeleton. 12 inches high, that emits a ghastly radiance in the dark. Not a pretty sight but a big thrill producer. Gives you the creeps when you know about it—but a real surprise for those who come upon it unaware.

No. 8612. Luminous skeleton. Prepaid **15c**

3 for 40c

Wizardeck

A full deck of 53 linen finish cards that you can use for play or magic. Deck is cut tapered, one end narrower than the other. Draw away card picked from the deck—and hundred of other amazing feats. Full instructions for performing 18 different tricks. Startle and entertain your friends. No skill required.

No. 8700. Wizardeck. Prepaid .. **75c**

NEW!! Spinthariscope

Positively the most astounding scientific instrument ever developed. This instrument formerly sold from $1.00 to $50.00 upwards. Now it is possible to get it for a small sum. Witness actual destruction of thousands of Worlds by simply looking through the lens of the instrument. Actual radium is disintegrated before your eyes. You see the atomic bombardment plainly. Instrument is guaranteed to contain a minute quantity of radium. There is no more enthralling sight in the whole world. Nothing to wear out. Lasts forever.

No. 8524—Spinthariscope complete with instructions. Prepaid **65c**

Invisible Ink

A fluid in which you can write love letters, confidential messages, etc., without fear of detection. Remains entirely invisible until paper is heated. Used extensively by secret service operatives, detectives, etc.

No. 8526. Invisible Ink.—Per bottle, prepaid **15c**

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Combination Cigar, Cigarette, Pipe Holder

A combination pipe, cigar holder and novelty view. A bottle shaped novelty that has a scenic view in the top, may be converted into a pipe, a cigar holder or a cigarette holder. Made of highly polished wood with aluminum fitting, bowls 6" tall when closed. A useful article and a real novelty. Assorted views. French actresses and scenic pictures.

No. 8598. Combination Cigar Holder. Prepaid **75c**

Cigarettehangt

Here boys is THE novelty. Box contains a dozen tiny wood pegs—but they are "treated." Push the sharp end of peg into cigarettes about 1/3 in. Pegs are so small they're invisible. Then offer your friends the cigarettes. BANG, BANG! they go off—Yet ENTIRELY HARMLESS.

No. 8530. Cigarettehangt Prepaid **15c**

Midget Harmonica

The smallest harmonica made, only 1¼" long. It is a practical musical instrument and a popular novelty. Has four single holes, eight perfectly tuned reeds, brass plates, nickel finish covers and ring to attach to your watch chain or fob.

No. 8514. Midget Harmonica. Prepaid **15c**

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The chemist of today with his modernized knowledge has secrets a thousandfold more potent at his command. He is the brains behind hundreds of rich industries, which could not exist without his skill. Yet the field of Applied Chemistry has spread so widely that it is difficult to get enough good men to fill the available posts. A chemical expert is always sure of a good income, a respected and confidential position and a guaranteed future. He may also make himself a fortune, as hundreds of chemists have done before him. Did you ever hear of C. M. Hall? He was an American chemist who at the age of twenty-one discovered how to extract aluminum from clay. It was known that this could be done. It remained for someone to experiment and do it. There are innumerable other chemical problems today waiting to be solved. Mr. Hall died a few years ago leaving an estate of many millions of dollars.

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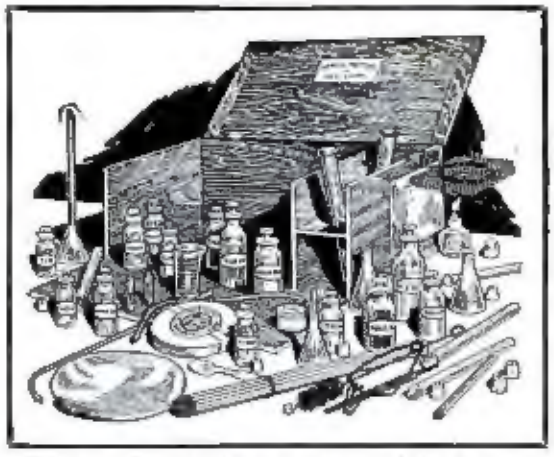

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It is a beautiful instrument of fine German make and extremely sensitive. Any person not a student of our course may procure one through us at $25.00, which is somewhat less than the usual price, but to those who enroll the microscope will be given ABSOLUTELY WITHOUT CHARGE. With it you will receive a special lesson on its construction and use. The microscope is not loaned to you. It becomes your permanent possession along with all the other equipment and the lessons.

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They dared Officer Kane to play

..and his music held them spellbound

ETHEL'S house party was at its height. Shrieks of laughter mingled with phonograph music could be heard outside.

Suddenly there came an ominous knocking at the door. Ethel ran to open it and—lo and behold—there stood Police Officer Kane.

"G-G-G Good Evening," gasped Ethel.

"I want to see the man of the house," thundered Kane.

"I'm sorry," stammered Ethel nervously, "but my father is not at home."

"Well, what's goin' on in here, anyway?" continued the officer sternly. "Sure and everyone on the block is complainin' of the noise. I've a good mind to arrest the lot of you."

Ethel was mortified—what a disgrace!

"Oh, please," pleaded Ethel, "please don't do anything like that, I promise—"

But Kane could restrain himself no longer.

"Don't worry lassie—you were all havin' such a fine time I couldn't help droppin' in. Go on—have all the fun you can," laughed the big good-natured policeman.

"Oh," sighed Ethel, greatly relieved, "how you frightened me. Won't you join us?"

Kane Joins the Party

"Ha," laughed Kane as the Victrola started again, "what's the matter with you all—playin' that canned music—can't any of you play this beautiful piano? Sure I'd like to give you a tune myself."

"I dare you to play for us," shouted Ted Strong quickly sensing a chance to have some fun at the policeman's expense.

Others chimed in, "Yes, do play for us, Officer." "Just one tune." "Yes, just one—that will be plenty!"

"I'm afraid I'll have to be goin'," stammered Kane, embarrassed as could be.

"Mr. Kane, I think you might play for me after the fright you gave me," smiled Ethel.

"Well, b'gorry, maybe I will," agreed the officer. And as he sat down at the piano everyone laughed and cheered. But the noise stopped instantly when he struck the first rollicking notes of Rudolph Friml's famous "Song of the Vagabonds." They were amazed at the way his large hands flew lightly over the keys.

"More—more." "Encore." "That's great—play another." They all shouted and applauded as the last notes of that snappy march song died away. Kane then started that stirring old soldier song, "On the Road to Mandalay." One by one the guests all joined in and sang.

Then Kane wound up with that popular dance number, "You're the Cream of My Coffee," and the whole crowd danced.

"Well," he laughed happily as they applauded long and loudly. "I'll have to be on my way now."

"Thank you for your lovely music," said Ethel. "You must be playing a good many years?"

"Sure and I haven't been playin' long at all." Then the questions came thick and fast. "How did you ever learn so quickly?" "When do you find time to practice?" "Who was your teacher?"

Kane Tells His Story

"Well, to tell you the truth I had no teacher. I've always loved music but I couldn't take regular lessons on account of my duties as a policeman. Then one evenin' I saw a U. S. School of Music advertisement in a magazine, tellin' of a new way of learnin' to play with no teacher at all. I didn't believe it myself but they offered a free sample lesson so I sent for it. One look at the Free Demonstration Lesson showed me how easy it was so I wrote for the whole course. My friends all told me I was crazy until I started playin' little tunes for them from real notes.

There were no tiresome scales or tedious exercises either. With these simple lessons I played real pieces almost from the start. Now I'm playin' classical numbers or jazz, havin' the time of my life."

* * *

This is not the story of just one isolated case. Over half a million people have learned to play by this simple method. You, too, can learn this easily understood way. Even if you don't know one note from another you'll grasp it in no time. First it *tells* you how to do a thing—then it shows you how in pictures—then you do it yourself and *hear* it.

You teach yourself—right at home—without any uninteresting finger exercises, tedious scales or other humdrum methods.

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To prove how practical this course is, the U. S. School of Music has arranged a typical demonstration lesson and explanatory booklet which you may have Free. They show how anyone can learn to play his favorite instrument by note in less than half the time and at a fraction of the cost of old slow methods. The Booklet will also tell you all about the amazing new *Automatic Finger Control*.

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